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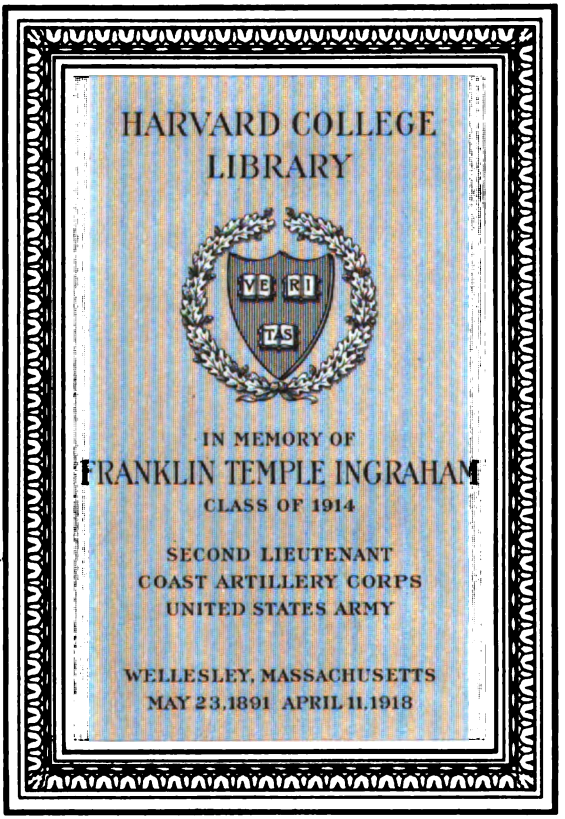


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# The Midland

VOLUME ONE

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# The Midland

VOLUME 1 JANUARY 1915 NUMBER 1

## The First Person Plural

THE MIDLAND is not a commercial enterprise, and it is not endowed. Its publishers, editors and contributors receive no payment for their work. Obviously, miscellaneous advertising is not sought or accepted. Possibly subscriptions will meet the only expenses of the magazine,—the cost of printing and mailing. With that faint hope its commercialism ends.

The magazine is merely a modest attempt to encourage the making of literature in the Middle West. The region is already renowned for certain material products and for financial prosperity; but the market of its literary and other artists has commonly been beyond the mountains, and the producers have commonly gone to their market. Possibly the region between the mountains would gain in variety at least if it retained more of its makers of literature, music, pictures, and other expressions of civilization. And possibly civilization itself might be with us a somewhat swifter process if expression of its spirit were more frequent. Scotland is none the worse for Burns and Scott, none the worse that they did not move to London and interpret London themes for London publishers.

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Makers of art do not moralize; yet they are artists because they have something to say. They have the faith of Saint Francis in something above the material, and for it they must at least have the will to take poverty as bride. So it happens that the Middle West has a few publishers, editors and writers who wish to do some of their work strictly in the amateur spirit. They will try to make and print some literature.

It is all an experiment, of course; but everybody who works at it will have some pleasure in the work and will hope to lighten and brighten life, even if slightly, for the Gentle Reader who may indeed wish to share also the joy of the work.

Dying, the Venerable Bede repeated the words of Saint Ambrose: "I have not lived so as to be ashamed to live among you; nor do I fear to die." When THE MIDLAND dies, late or soon, may it die unashamed and leave pleasant memories.

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## From The Midland Monthly to The Midland

### A Letter from Johnson Brigham

December 5, 1914.

Mr. John T. Frederick,
Managing Editor, THE MIDLAND,
Iowa City, Iowa.

Dear Mr. Frederick:—

I am glad to learn that the first number of the new MIDLAND is about to appear. Twenty-one years ago at this time, I was toiling over the initial number of my *Midland Monthly* which was to bear the date, January, 1894.

All through my career of a dozen years as a journalist in Iowa, I secretly indulged in a dream of some day founding a magazine which should voice the best thought of the Middle West. When, in '93, I returned from a brief experience as Consul at Aix-la-Chapelle, and disposed of my proprietary interest in the Cedar Rapids *Republican,* I found myself for the first time free to attempt a realization of my dream. The times were hard, but there seemed to be enough of promise in the situation to warrant the attempt. I therefore deemed it best to pass through the period of inevitable loss as early as possible, that I might take full advantage of a return of good times. Nearly five years passed, and business conditions were not much, if any, improved. When an opportunity came to turn the magazine over to St. Louis parties,



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I felt a sense of relief, feeling that if the *Midland Monthly* were doomed to die, I, at least, would not have to attend the funeral! It "died and made no sign."

The weakness of the situation lay in my inability to obtain general advertising at paying prices. The strength of the *Midland Monthly* was in its large constituency of devoted readers and contributors,—who genuinely mourned its departure. That the *Midland Monthly* filled a "long-felt want" was evident by the chorus of regrets which came from all quarters of the State, and from outside the State; and is further evidenced by the fact that no periodical in our State Library, or in the Library Commission, is so well thumbed and worn, and that public libraries throughout the State have eagerly availed themselves of the efforts of the Library Commission to supply them with sets of the magazine. A further evidence of the want it created is the fact that the former secretary of our Library Commission found it desirable to publish a General Index, covering the eleven volumes of the *Midland Monthly*, sending it free to the libraries of the State, and selling it to individuals.

But this is ancient history. No one can be quite as much pleased as I am over the new MIDLAND, reviving my hope that a substantial medium for the best thought of the Middle West is about to be established at Iowa's educational center, and under auspices so favorable as to warrant its continued existence and healthy growth.

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I have come to think that the best things in life come to us through our apparent failures. No other portion of my busy career has given me more real satisfaction than those five years of unremitting toil, and no associations have been more lastingly satisfying than those which had their origin in the experiences of a score of years ago.

Congratulating you in advance, and wishing you the success which was denied me, I am,

Yours very truly,

JOHNSON BRIGHAM.

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## The Masterpiece

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

From life's harsh fret, he turned to dream
His own fair world. The chaos-swarm
Of lights within his heart agleam
Smote, like the sun-shafts after storm,
Upon one clear white form,—

Thine, O Apollo. Then through days
He labored slowly at his stone,
Moulding, beneath those secret rays,
The vision he had seen alone,—
The god that was his own.

And as the shining figure grew
From matter rude to shape divine,
His worship of its beauty knew
No bounds; he cried with eyes ashine—
"Behold, this God is mine!"

And now thou standest in his house,
Silent and beautiful of grace.
Thy sky-born limbs, thine open brows,
The tranquil glory of thy face
Illumine that poor place.



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He turns,—and sees thy cloudless eyes.
  Though from his hand, a god thou art!
Thine immortality denies
  The maker's frail and craving heart
  That has in thee no part.

Thou art not his: on sudden wings
  To alien worlds thy soul has flown.
And he among his common things
  Once more turns weary and alone
  To hew another stone.

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## Silent Battle

### A Tribal Episode of the Early West

By Keene Abbott

Of the three chiefs going a far journey to make peace-talk with the Great White Father, the first to be chosen was the man called Truth Teller. Two others, Standing Wolf and Bent Oak, went with him; and returning thence, they were very proud, those men.

Truth Teller, alone, was not puffed up. At the council, when they made their report, he was silent. He listened, he heard, yet would he not speak, either to affirm or to deny what they, his brother chiefs, had said.

All the tribe knew of his silence. The whole village heard of it at once, and among those who thought it not a good thing but very bad, was his wife, Running Fire.

For see, now, how matters stand. People do not want to believe those other chiefs. Though Bent Oak and Standing Wolf may have spoken with true tongues, their report has left nothing but mistrust.

*That,* silence has done for them—Truth Teller's silence. He has smothered them beneath the blanket of his dumbness. But is it the part of a brave man to keep silent? If their talk to the council has gone a crooked trail, then should Truth Teller speak out. He should speak, and shame them. Let him rebuke them; let him smut ashes in their eyes!



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So urged the woman, Running Fire. In the tepee, in the firelight, seated near the sheaf of dogwood arrow-shafts that hung a-drying in the blue wood-smoke, the strong chief listened in silence to this talk of his wife. So deeply he listened that he tried to light his pipe with a hot coal—his pipe that was already lighted. Presently he said:

"But if they do not believe *my* report?"

"Not believe? How not believe? Who is he that dares to doubt?"

Truth Teller said nothing. He scorched his fingers with the hot coal; he dropped it, and long he smoked in silence before he answered:

"There is none among my brothers who will believe. Out of respect to me they would try, but they will not—they cannot believe. For I have only that to say which is beyond belief."

There came now an interval in which naught was heard in the tepee but a wheezy rustle in the smoke hole, where hung a bunch of dry sage leaves as a prayer offering calculated to keep off lightning strokes and bad spirits. By and by Truth Teller slowly added:

"You know how it was when the report first came among us of the white man's fire-boat on the river of Clouded Water. Nobody believed. Even now, here in this village, there are those among our old men who do not believe."

"Whether reasonable or unreasonable," said Running Fire, "truth is truth."

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"Right. That is so," her husband agreed, but presently he was saying, "Bent Oak and Standing Wolf are shrewd men. They put nothing into their report that did not sound easy to believe. But I, if I spoke, I would have to tell all of the truth. Then, when nobody believes me, my power is broken. I am no longer head chief of the Dakotas. My people are betrayed into the guidance of turbulent leaders—perhaps into needless war."

Running Fire, daughter of a chief and wife of a chief, now had in her proud face the look of a chief.

"Is power so necessary to him," she asked, "that he, my Truth Teller, is afraid to tell the truth?"

Even such audacity as this, doubly audacious coming from a woman, was allowed to go unheeded. Truth Teller knew what was wrong. His wife was inquisitive. Curiosity had hold of her. She wanted to hear all about his journey to see the Great White Father, in the far-off place called Washington. And he, wise chief though he was, suffered as much with his desire to speak as she with her desire to hear. In her face, when she had snuggled confidingly close to him, he saw the question which she had not the courage to ask:

"Why not see whether *I* will believe? Why not try it on me?"

With devouring interest her eyes were fixed upon his impassive face, until by and by, when she had bent her head that her ear might be near his mouth, he daringly whispered:

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"The white man has a way to make iron burn. He has only to touch it with one of his little fire-splinters. Then the flame spreads out, a flame as big as your ear. It burns; it stays like that; it stays all night long like that."

Having said this, Truth Teller leaned back to observe the effect; and he saw how hard the mind of his wife was toiling to credit this thing. Presently she said:

"And it was not one of those grease-sticks?—those tallow things with a wick in them, such as the French fur-traders have?"

"No, Running Fire, no; not that! There is an iron rod hanging down from the sky of what is called a room; it hangs down almost to my head when I am standing up. And it has also two arms of iron. Each of them is tipped with a little split pebble. You turn a screw-thing; you touch the fire-splinter to the split pebble, and then, *then* the flame blossoms out, clear and beautiful."

A troubled, anxious look came into the woman's face.

"Is it not," she faltered, "is it not some kind of magic?"

"No, it is not. That is, I myself, I can do it."

"*You* make iron burn?"

"I."

"You can do it?"

"*There* I did it."

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Straightway Running Fire was for bringing in the rusted barrel of an old broken musket, with the idea that it was to be hung up in the tepee, and the end of it lighted so that it would burn in a beautiful clear flame. Truth Teller said No. He had no split pebble. He had no screw to turn. Besides that, he had given away all of the fire-splinters that he brought back from Washington.

Distrust shadowed itself in the face of his wife, and the heart of Truth Teller grew heavy within him. He saw that this woman who loved him was trying hard to believe: yes, he saw that; but he knew that she, Running Fire, even *she* could make nothing of that simple little truth he had told her. Surely, then, there would be no hope for him, utterly none, if he attempted to tell the council everything he had seen during the time that he, and Standing Wolf, and Bent Oak had gone a far journey to Washington.

If it was to be considered so marvelous, this trivial thing Truth Teller had spoken about, then how might it be if he were to speak in council of an iron road that he had seen for the first time?—a road where ran an iron horse that ate nothing but fire?

Amazing thing, the wink and gleam of brass on the fine wagons whipping frantically along! The jar of the ground, the roar, the rumble and tumble of noise, as of thunder-birds flying! The horse heaving and panting, coughing out terror and smoke! rushing along, cleaving the air with motion swifter than eagle's wing, pausing not at rivers to ford deep

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water!—no, but plunging, leaping right over the widest streams with a pounding clamor of joy!

Sometimes the horse did not bother to go over a hill; sometimes he bunted the hill and went right on through. For awhile there would be a smudge of swimming and ringing darkness; then, all at once, a white blaze of sunshine streaming in!

Magic? Perhaps! Yet true, every word, every syllable, every breath of it! He had seen those things!

But tell of them? No, never. He would not kill his good name. He would not suffer an ignominy worse than death.

So he thought—*then*. But the leaders of the tribe's folk besought him; his friends urged him; the soldiers' lodge demanded of him that he speak out. And influences of one kind or another, together with the wheedling of his wife, so strongly roped him about that finally he was resolved to make his report.

People had said he was afraid to speak. He, Truth Teller, afraid!

The idea, it is true, had come to him of sanctioning the report made by Bent Oak and Standing Wolf. Yes, that could be done. Why not? For in so far as they had spoken, they had most truthfully spoken. Their only fault had been incompleteness.

It was Truth Teller's belief that they should have told every detail: how they traveled, whither they traveled, what they saw, what they did. To his mind it was not right, it was very wrong to tell only a few

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important facts concerning the peace-agreement. It was a matter of supreme significance, so he thought, that his people should be forewarned of the strength, the secret forces, the potency of the white man.

Hence, even though ill-boding shadows might brood in his heart of a chief, he was not of those men who shirk a duty. He, Truth Teller, who had ever been strong on the war trail against the Ojibways, the Pawnees and the Crows, still had in him the courage to show his people that, as he could bravely do battle for them, so likewise could he die for them; or, if it must be, he would show a stout heart in the sacrifice of his good name.

So it was that at last, in the sore-eyed moon of icy winds and snow, he said to his friends:

"Call the council. I will speak."

But first he gave a feast. He entertained his friends; gayly he entertained, so that none among them might guess of the deep anxiety gnawing at his breast. Yet those who partook of his hospitality did think it a little strange that, the feast being over, he should dispose of all his property.

To relatives he gave many ponies. Beautifully tanned skins he likewise yielded up, skins of the deer, the bear, the antelope, and soft furs of the beaver, of the otter and of the silver fox. He kept nothing. Even his musket he gave away.

Then, the time having come for a meeting of the council, he stood up in the place of honor, opposite the entrance of the lodge, and with deliberate, ear-

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nest voice told what he had to tell, from the journey's start to the journey's end. He did not forget a single detail of all he had felt, of all he had seen, of all that he had done.

Having finished, he sat down; and straightway a great silence made itself felt in the council lodge. The ceremonial pipe that had been passing from one man to another no longer breathed forth its fragrant smoke. Nobody looked at Truth Teller. For a time no word was spoken.

Presently, though, the wise men, the logicians, the satirists began their work. There were keen arguments, gibes, sneers. They completely riddled Truth Teller's plain narrative.

Nobody in the council believed, nobody but Bent Oak and Standing Wolf; and they, jealous of Truth Teller and of his power, did not rise to defend him. They were silent.

Meanwhile Truth Teller hearkened to what was said. Long the chief heard himself derided; long and patiently he listened. Without comment he bore all that was given him to bear, even until the last insult had been spoken. Then, once more, he rose in his place. To the council he said, not angrily nor bitterly, but bravely and calmly:

"Man's authority is as the snow that falls, and melts: a little time remains, and then is gone in a mist.

"I am the snow. I have fallen upon the pastures

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of my people that later the grass may be green and the rivers deep with sweet water.

"Let it be so. Blight not this land with the blood of the white man, but freshen it with his wisdom. Learn his ways; learn also his treachery that you may beware of it.

"For as the white man has made a gun, so does he make other guns, bigger, more powerful, more destructive than plagues of smallpox. Know, O chiefs, there are guns of brazen lungs that speak with the voice of darkness,—guns whose tread of wheels is a quaking of the ground,—guns whose fire-speech shakes the bones of the world, as with mighty thunders rolling, as when all the thunders of old night were rolling, in that day and in that year, when as yet there were neither days nor years, but darkness only.

"This is my word to you, my brothers. It is my word that a new way of life must come to us. Out of the soil, the nourisher of all, must we be sustained—we, and our children, and our children's children, to the last of them. For the life of the tepee will vanish away; the bow will be broken, the last buffalo killed, yet will the Sun Father and the Mothering Earth never forget us. In kindness they will keep us. Contentment of home and harvest will come to us. In peace shall we lie down to sleep, knowing that the White Captain will never send against us his long-knife men, the blue-coat soldiers, and mighty guns thundering.

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"You have heard me speak. It is my last word; for though I was first among you in authority and rich, now I am poor. Nothing is left to me, not even my good name."

Speaking these words, the chief raised his hand with dignity to his head. He plucked the two eagle feathers from his hair—plucked them out and cast them from him. Then he strode gravely forth into the icy wilderness, the white and frozen silence of the hills.

Here it was that the pine trees, ragged with their winter shrouds, showed glimpses of dark branches that looked black in contrast with the blinding brightness of sunshine upon the snow. Meanwhile, swathed tight in his red blanket which was like a scarlet flame in the keen clearness of that afternoon, he went his way, determinedly crossing pillowed ridge and smothered valley.

Self-condemned to exile, he was striding steadfastly along. He must continue; he must keep going on, even until that hour when frozen sleep, or his brother, the wolf, or his friend, the mountain lion, should take him hence into the land of Waukon, the Great Mystery. Then would he chant his death-song. The trail of his moccasined feet would end.

Looking back across the unsheared fleeces of the hills, he saw the place where the frosted air was blue with the breath of tepee fires; and to his ears, from that far village in the hill-ringed valley, came the shrilling of voices that mourned. Rising and falling,

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now vague and far off, now thin and brittle clear in the icy emptiness of space, pulsed the sob-calls of his mother and of her whose name, in the tongue of the Dakotas, is the word meaning Running Fire, as when a star melts and runs down the purple sky.

For him was this mourning. With coal-smirched faces, with hair hacked off, with knife-gashed bodies and with bleeding hearts were the women mourning.

He was gone from them. He was gone forth, unarmed, beyond the pine-crested hills, into a frozen country where dwell people of bitter blood and beasts that kill. Having unlocked his lips in council, he must now, also, bare his hearing to the wailings of sorrow. Those ears of his must not be muffled with his blanket against the cries quivering afar into the freezing air. No matter how that grief of women might scorch, and burn, and ache through every fiber of his body, it was not given him, a strong man, to deafen himself to their crying.

He must bear that. Alone in the wilderness, alone, where none might see, even here he must not give himself up to vain regrets and sadness. As he had gone through tortures of the sun-dance, so would he go through this.

Only she would not be with him now—she, Running Fire, who many times, in an evil hour, had been used to minister to him. Into bleeding wounds she had rubbed healing earth; while a maiden, before he had taken her as a wife to his tepee, she had greased his face after the sun-dance; she had given him cool

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water for the shriveled dryness of his mouth, and soothingly had put her hand over the frightful burning of his eyes.

Thinking of all this, Truth Teller continued upon his way. On he went—on, and still on, until finally he came to a flat prairie, peopled only with the sugar-loaf mounds of sage bushes fluffed over with the new snowfall of last night. In front of him, back of him, on every side of him the land lay dumb, sparkling, swathed deep, grim in its majesty of loveliness, terrifying in its tragic silence. The wind slept, but the frozen emptiness of space awaited the coming wind.

It came. In the hour when the inflamed eye of the west burned crimsoning through the black and white network of pine trees that crested a hilltop, the snow serpents, little ominous whiffs of powdering white, began to hiss. At every step these sinuous frost-flames started up, they rose, they went dusting on into the stupefying wilderness of cold. Sage bushes were shaking off their burdens, tufted grasses and dead weed-stalks helplessly bent and writhed in the wind, a fog of splintered ice was thickening in the air.

Night fell, and with the coming of the night the power of the storm increased. The gale heightened, the snow-waves rose into a herding stampede of billows, rose hurling and blurring into space.

"So! I shall sleep," said Truth Teller.

Already the tingling burn of frost was pricking his feet and hands and face.

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Presently, as he was being pushed and fumbled along by the wind, his ice-dulled faculties began to take account of phantom shapes, horses and men, that sometimes smokily disclosed themselves and then were smutted out, only to come again and once again be swallowed up by the white darkness and colossal snow-washings of the night.

Truth Teller said to himself:

"I am nearing the place. Already I see the land of Waukon, the Great Mystery. It is good now that here I lay me down and chant my song of death."

He did so. His storm-choked voice shrilled into the night. And it seemed to him presently that shadow folk, vague spirit people obscurely seen, were answering him, were whooping and struggling to be heard.

"Truth Teller! Great Chief! We come!"

Nearer sounded the voices; nearer, more distinct grew the shadow shapes about him. By and by the shouting was very close.

"Great Chief, sing not your song of death! We come. We are your people. We are those who need their chief."

This voice, a familiar voice, was the crying out of Standing Wolf. With him were Bent Oak and other men of strength among his people. They were calling and calling:

"Greatest of chiefs, be still our chief!"

Brotherly hands were laid upon him; strong arms raised him up. Said Bent Oak, his friend:

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"See, my horse is here. Mount. Ride. Ride with us to the feast that we give this night in honor of your name."

Truth Teller answered:

"Put me down, and go your way. My people no longer believe in me. Here do I sing my song of death, to the end of it."

And even as the storm was shouting, so shouted every man:

"Rise. Come with us! We believe. Everybody believes!"

"They believe?" questioned Truth Teller.

"We have said it."

"Everybody?"

"Yes, all—everybody."

"How believe? You have good hearts, yes; but believe? No, it is rather your kindness to me."

"Bent Oak and myself," said Standing Wolf, "both of us have reported to the council the same as you reported. We were ashamed. We had to tell the truth, all of the truth."

"And they believe?"

"Every word, everything!"

Then, with a big voice, Truth Teller said: "I come."

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# The Authors' Homecoming of 1914

By James B. Weaver

President of the Iowa Press and Authors' Club

The Iowa Authors' Homecoming of 1914 was just an effort to restore the balance of emphasis in the life of the state. It was feared the rewards of Mississippi Valley husbandry had become all to engrossing. The neighbors began to hint that Iowa ears were attuned only to the sounds of the dinner-bell; that her only books were a bulging pocket book and an agricultural report; that Iowa acres could turn out hogs, corn and politicians, but could make no contribution in the realm of the spirit, that realm wherein the panorama of life is seen with the eye of the imagination, is delineated through the medium of art, and wherein the soul of man moves ever from the personal to the universal. Of course we could not stand that, at least an Iowa Press and Authors' Club could not. Hence the recent "Homecoming of Iowa Authors, Journalists and Illustrators", held in Des Moines October fifth, sixth and seventh.

The invitation embraced not only those born in Iowa, but also such as had lived for years within the state, and had begun here work which was the foundation of later renown. The project met with instant and enthusiastic response, and brought in person and message, from all over the nation, a loving answer to the call from Mother Iowa. Three days were filled to overflowing with emphasis upon Iowa's



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place in the world of letters, upon the service of the old-time men of the press, and upon the distinction achieved by Iowa men and women in the great field of illustration.

On the sixth an "Afternoon" was given at the home of Hon. Gardner Cowles, where hundreds of the people of the city met the distinguished visitors. Verses and songs by Iowans were given, while many characters from books of authors present were impersonated in costume. At night, an authors' evening was given on invitation at University Place church to an audience of twenty-five hundred, the program including Herbert Quick, Emerson Hough, Julia Ellen Rogers, Edward A. Steiner, Edna Ferber and Rupert Hughes. At the last moment Mr. Quick and Miss Ferber were unable to be present. Miss Alice French (Octave Thanet) presided as honorary president. Miss Ruth Gaynor rendered a number of charming songs by her mother, Mrs. Jessie L. Gaynor, the well known composer.

On the seventh, at the State Historical building, was held in the forenoon a meeting of the pioneer newspaper men. The program here included speeches by Lafayette Young, Harvey Ingham, Alex Miller, John P. Irish, and others. Mr. Irish, who came from California to attend the meeting, proved himself still master of that eloquence which was the sensation of the state twenty-five years ago. This meeting was followed by an elaborate luncheon tendered by Hon. Edwin T. Meredith at his plant, "Successful

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Farming", as a courtesy to the club. Here there were further speeches by Hamlin Garland, Rupert Hughes and Randall Parrish, and letters were read from Robert J. Burdette and others unable to attend.

On Wednesday evening was held the closing event, the banquet, at Younker's Tea Room. Four hundred attended. The program included responses by Hamlin Garland, Joe Mitchell Chapple, Helen Sherman Griffith, Randall Parrish, Alice French and John P. Irish. A number of letters were read from absent Iowans, among them characteristic greetings from Ellis Parker Butler, Charles Eugene Banks, Franklin W. Calkins and George Fitch. The veteran litterateur, John Townsend Trowbridge, of Dorchester, Mass., now in his eighty-seventh year, sent greetings as follows:

"Iowa Authors, for your merry meeting
An elder brother sends fraternal greeting."

And from the Boston Authors' Club came the message:

"Please accept from your colleague in literary sympathy and fellowship, the Boston Authors' Club, most cordial greeting and best wishes of all its members for the great success of your reunion."

Besides the more formal events many meetings were held before local clubs and societies, where Iowa writers were heard, among them being Arthur Davison Ficke, Major Byers, Lewis Worthington Smith, Miss French, Miss Rogers and Hamlin Garland.

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Regrets and greetings were received from many Iowans now well known to the reading public, including Dr. Woods Hutchinson, Susan Glaspell, Charles Edward Russell, Albert Shaw, James S. Clarkson, Albert Bigelow Paine, Eleanor Hoyt Brainerd, Walter Barr, Herbert S. Bashford, Gen. G. M. Dodge, Warren D. Foster, Roy Rolfe Gilson, Newell Dwight Hillis, Jefferson L. Harbor, Howard C. Kegley, Roy Norton, Irving B. Richman, Verner Z. Reed, Edwin L. and Elbridge Sabin, Trumbull White, and Selden L. Whitcomb.

The meeting attracted wide attention throughout the state and nation, has done much to arouse a higher state pride, and will serve as a distinct encouragement to further creative effort by the sons and daughters of Iowa. Through the deep interest of Mr. Edgar R. Harlan, Curator of the Iowa Historical Department, a tentative list of Iowa authors and their works has been compiled and published by the department. It is planned to circulate this list in all the libraries of the State, with a view to a wider reading and appreciation of the books of Iowans.

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# The Midland Library

The upward trend of Milton's literary genius to its height in "Paradise Lost" is set forth in a new book entitled "Essays on Milton," by E. N. S. Thompson, Assistant Professor of English in the State University of Iowa. It is published by the Yale University Press.

"Songs of the Outlands: Ballads of the Hoboes and Other Verse" will appeal to those subject to chronic or periodic attacks of *wanderlust*. This volume is the latest from the pen of Henry Herbert Knibbs, and is published by the Houghton Mifflin Company.

"Bookplates in Iowa" is a dainty booklet of 56 pages by Malcolm G. Wyer (former librarian of the State University of Iowa), of Lincoln, Nebraska, to which Mr. T. Henry Foster has added a note on "The Pleasures of Collecting." Printed in an edition of only 100 copies, it was "out of print" almost as soon as issued. The luxury of bookplates is comparatively new to Iowa, yet Mr. Wyer estimates that there are over one hundred in the state, of which thirty-two examples appear in the book, ranging from simple pen drawings to landscape "coppers". The "format" meets every demand of taste and dignity. Mr. Wyer sketches the historical development of the bookplate, with an entertaining review of Iowa plates from the standpoint of the historian rather than that of the enthusiast. His collaborator

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writes as a collector who finds in "ex libris" no less of pleasure than education. It is regrettable that the edition is so small, since its value and beauty make it a choice acquisition for the library. It is published by the Torch Press.

"Radisson: the Voyageur" is the title of a four-act metrical drama concerning the French explorer whose work, in great part, led to the founding of the present city of St. Paul. The play is semi-historical in character, and depicts the life of the early *coureurs de bois* in the wilderness beyond Lake Superior. It is well suited to amateur open-air performance. The author is Lily A. Long, and the volume is published by Henry Holt and Company.

"The Winning of the Far West" is a discussion of the territorial growth of the United States between the years 1829 and 1867. It covers the period from the opening of the Texan controversy to the acquisition of Alaska. The volume is a continuation of Theodore Roosevelt's "Winning of the West". The author, Robert McNutt McElroy, is Edwards Professor of American History in Princeton University. G. P. Putnam's Sons are the publishers.

The publication of a new collection of the poems of Major S. H. M. Byers brings home to us the importance of his contribution to the poetry of the central west. Major Byers has not only given the name to "Sherman's March to the Sea" and written songs which are known in thousands of Middle Western homes. He has also worked steadily and consistently for the best in the life of his chosen region. This new collection bears the imprint of the Neale Publishing Company.

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Selden L. Whitcomb's "Autumn Notes in Iowa" is a real addition to the literature of the Middle West. It consists of a collection of notes on birds and plants and men, arranged in daily sequence for the three autumn months. The book is modest and unassuming in tone, but of absorbing interest to one who knows and loves the region. The author's scientific knowledge gives many of his careful observations a permanent value apart from the charms of their presentation. Several interesting photographs are marked by the same genuineness that constitutes the highest merit of the text. The reader is grateful for the appendices, with their lists of trees and autumnal flowers, their excerpts from the fascinating "Diaries of William Savage", and the interesting little "Chronology of Iowa". Mr. Whitcomb is a steadfast believer in the literary future—and present—of the Middle West. He voices the spirit of the whole region when he writes: "The days will soon pass, if not already passed, in which the stranger can with fairness say of the citizens of Iowa:

They have no love for bird or flowers
No reverence for their past;
They sing not, 'Nature, Art are ours,
We cherish, hold them fast'."

Altogether, the book is one which will be read through, and returned to again and again with increasing pleasure. We are glad to be able to mention in the first number of this department a book of such genuine worth for the libraries of this region. It is printed by the Torch Press.

The first two volumes of Clarence R. Aurner's "History of Education in Iowa", published by the State Historical Society of Iowa, have just appeared. This work, in six volumes, will afford the first comprehensive study of the

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development of a state's educational system. The present volumes deal with elementary schools in Iowa as territory and state; later volumes will take up the history of secondary education. The printing is done by the Clio Press, in the "format" characteristic of the Society's publications.

"Wisconsin Plays," comprising "The Neighbors," by Zona Gale; "In Hospital," by Thomas H. Dickinson; and "Glory of the Morning," by William Ellery Leonard, is a volume of plays edited by Thomas H. Dickinson. It is published by B. W. Huebsch.

"The Drums of the 47th" is the last message from the pen of Robert J. Burdette. In the days when death was stealing upon him, he was uttering his last plea for peace in this volume of personal experience in camp and at the battle front. The wit of the author is displayed in its widest range in his observations on his three years' service in the 47th Regiment of Illinois Volunteers. The Bobbs Merrill Company are the publishers.

"A Pageant of the North-West" is a representation by the University of North Dakota of successive stages in the development of the great North-West. The story consists of four parts. The first deals with the preparatory work of Radisson, the second the unifying efforts of La Salle, the third the extension of the frontier by Verendrye, and the fourth the completion of discovery by Lewis and Clark. The pageant follows historic fact in all essentials, many speeches being produced in their original forms. Native Indian music is used in the presentation. No notice of actual publication has as yet been given.

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# The Midland Chronicle

The annual meeting of the American Political Science Association will be held in Chicago, December 29 and 30, 1914.

The American Historical Association will hold its thirtieth annual meeting in Chicago, December 29 to 31, 1914. The headquarters of the association will be at the Auditorium Hotel.

The third number of "The Miscellany", a quarterly journal of bibliology published at Kansas City, Missouri, contains the first installment of a very interesting discussion of "The Bookplates of Horace Walpole and his Contemporaries". Especially attractive is a reproduction of a bookplate of Walter M. Aikman. Two new departments, "Bibliographical Notes" and "Bookplate Notes", are inaugurated with this issue.

The Central Division of the Modern Language Association of America will hold its twentieth annual meeting at Minneapolis, Minnesota, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, December 29, 30, and 31, 1914. All the sessions except that of Tuesday evening will be conducted in the Minnesota Union, on the University campus. Afternoon and evening meetings will be held on each of the three days. The Tuesday evening session will consist of an address of welcome by President George E. Vincent of the University of Minnesota, and an address by the chairman of the Central Di-

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vision of the Association, Professor Julius Goebel of the University of Illinois. The other sessions will be devoted to the reading and discussion of papers. Twenty-one universities and colleges are represented on the program.

The December number of "Poetry", the magazine of verse published in Chicago, contains a group of four lyrics by Scharmel Iris, which have real poetic worth. Best of these, perhaps, are "After the Martyrdom" and "Early Nightfall", though the latter is overburdened with figurative expressions. Seumas O'Sullivan contributes work of distinctively Celtic quality.

The last number of "The Mid-West Quarterly", the admirable journal published by the University of Nebraska, contains the following articles by Middle Western writers: "Plato's Political Ideas", by P. H. Frye; "Theories of Cosmic Evolution", by G. D. Swezey; "Charles Peirce at Johns Hopkins", by Ellery W. Davis; and "Literature and the Newer Intellectualism" by Philo M. Buck, Jr.

To the family of magazines devoted to history was added, June, 1914, a new member. We refer to "The Mississippi Valley Historical Review", published quarterly at Urbana, Illinois, by the Mississippi Valley Historical Association. The expressed purpose of the magazine is "the promotion of research in the history of the valley". The magazine is to include information concerning the "progress of historical literature", as well as pure history. In form and general make-up it resembles the American Historical Review. Among the contributors to the first two numbers appear the names of Milo M. Quaife, James A. James, Isaac J. Cox, Carl R. Fish, and other recognized authorities in the field of Mississippi Valley history.

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# The Midland

A MAGAZINE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

VOLUME ONE JANUARY, 1915 NUMBER ONE
$1.50 a Year 15c a Copy

*Editor* - - - - - - - JOHN T. FREDERICK
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*Consulting Editor* - - - - - C. F. ANSLEY

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Certain things have become evident in preparing the introductory number of THE MIDLAND. One of these is the willingness of Middle Western writers to give of their time and labor in order to make possible the publication of such a magazine. Their experience proves that the spirit of the Middle West does not at present find adequate expression. They share our belief in the literary future of this region.

We have found, too, that the Middle West possesses a regional consciousness. We have met with a response not bounded by rivers nor limited by state lines. The Middle West exists as a unit in the life of the world. It is waiting for self-expression.

In this first number THE MIDLAND has sought only to get acquainted—to introduce itself and make clear the reasons for its coming. The possibilities for the development of a western magazine, devoted to the service of all our classes of reading and thinking people, have been little more than suggested. But we trust that we have made clear the magazine's belief in, and dedication to, the highest interests of the Middle West.

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# The Midland

A MAGAZINE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

VOLUME I FEBRUARY, 1915 NUMBER 2


## A Cycle of Love-Lyrics


By William Ellery Leonard


[The five songs, each of which has its own completeness, form, when combined, a larger unit with implicit narrative: that is, they represent an attempt at a true "lyrical ballad." They were written for the composer, Louis Adolph Coerne, whose beautiful and subtle musical interpretation will shortly be published, with accompanying text, by Clayton F. Summy Company, Sixty-four East Van Buren Street, Chicago.—Author's Note.]

### I. I NEED YOU SO

Come, love, to me! Old griefs have made me dumb,
My palms not yet can bring you flowers, I know;
I can but plead, beloved, "Come, O come,—
I need you so!"

Come! though my eyes be sobered by the stars,
My feet long lame from wanderings in the snow,
Some joy and some great kindness shall be ours:
I need you so!


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## II. YOU WILL UNDERSTAND

You have had sorrow, dearest, you no less.
Tears, secret tears, when none were nigh to guess,
Tears, when the strangers led you by the hand—
O you will understand.

You have had sorrow, dearest, you no less.
You drank love's cup from springs of bitterness,
And purchased hope erewhile in Deadmen's Land—
O you will understand.

## III. I HAVE YOUR WORD

I have your word; you trembled not, nor clung,
But spake it eye to eye,—
A woman, though so beautiful and young,
So strong to live or die.

I have your word; 'twas by no glimmering stair,
No odorous garden close;
But the sun heard you and the mountain air,
The oak and the wild rose.

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## IV. CRONES OF THE VALLEY

Crones of the valley saw you on the lea,
Down from the mountain on that morn with me,
And whispered wildly close against your side:
"Of old a strange and evil man was he."
And, braving scorn and slander, you replied:
"And were it true, my love has set him free"—
And passed along in faith and peace and pride,
"And were it true, my love has set him free."

## V. WINDOW AND HEARTH

We have a window high above the throng,
Above the cars that rumble all day long;
And over autumn tree-tops in the park,
We watch the cold red sunset in the dark.

We have a hearth, and its mysterious blaze
Consumes sad memories of other days;
Hand clasped in hand we name the years-to-be
Here in the city of the inland sea.

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## The Prairie Seasons

### SPRING—A MENTAL RAMBLE

SELDEN L. WHITCOMB

In an article on "Work and Weather," in *Harper's Magazine* for January of this year, the author refers to those people who "live in a climate which is stimulating all the time and therefore exhausting because there is no alternation from day to day or season to season." This is not for us who dwell in the central prairie region! Ours is a seasonal experience, and the days of our earthly sojourn are reckoned by the old, familiar measures of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. Varying from year to year, from locality to locality, developing not with the accuracy of a machine but with an irregular rhythm almost personal, still each prairie season has its special character, established in nature and in the hearts and affairs of men. Spring will be spring this year as of old, though we cannot foretell its mood from week to week.

In a sense every season is transitional, but we readily conceive summer and winter as states of equilibrium, spring and autumn as periods of restless intermediate movement. The composition of spring is complex enough to include strains from the music of all other seasons, but in its essential character its motifs are those of winter, fading in diminuendo passages to final extinction, and those of



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summer rising by crescendoes into final victory. It is a period of last things and of first things, and to imagination brings the pathos of the passing and the glory of becoming.

Emphasis may be on the forward look, the awakening, the new life; but not all that departs is of unpleasant nature. The snow sinks on the slope, the sleet falls from the shrubbery, the ice goes out of the river, but, also, sooner or later the "winter visitants" among the birds fly northward, and we see no more of tree sparrows, Harris sparrows, pine siskins, snowbirds, till another fall. The trees are covered with blossoms and with foliage, but we have lost the sense of free, open space, and the delicate, intricate tracery of branches against a winter sky.

The first things of spring! Some known every year since childhood, some to be introduced to us for the first time this very year; some tender, some robust; some desired and some dreaded. The first of March—like a lamb or like a lion; the first of April —fooling or being fooled; the first of May—baskets at the door and warblers in the garden. Some of these novelties of the year are merely a development of values latent with us in the winter—the "ground-hog" in the sun for the ground-hog in his hole; the tasseled bloom on the elm trees for the close-wrapped winter buds. Others are new-comers from beyond —bobolinks and monarch butterflies from the south, and baby wolves in the den. Woe be to that heart that has entirely lost its thrill at the first frog con-

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cert, the first local spring flowers, be they violets of blue, "dog-tooth violets," pasque-flowers, blood-roots, anemones, hepaticas, or simple clusters of shepherd's-purse. Abnormal the eyes or ears that do not gladly greet the first flying kite, the first booming of the prairie chickens, the first song of brown thrasher and orchard oriole, the first calf in the farmyard, first harrow along the corn-rows, and even the first lettuce in the garden. Not so welcome are the initial thunder-storm and tornado, hail-storm over the hills and dead nestling on the lawn. Death and life; prose and poetry—but always, in due season, triumphant movement toward another summer.

If spring begins, in popular conception, with March, and officially late in March, in a wide area of the prairie region there are unmistakable and customary "signs of spring" in February. Even in January, in the north-eastern section of Kansas, the increasing variety and fluency of the cardinal's song seems to seal the passing of winter. In February, in this locality, the soft maples may bloom, violets be fragrant in the garden, fresh foliage appear on the shrub, wasps, bees and butterflies be on the wing, and the meadowlarks sing now and then on the campus meadows. The flicker, whose piercing cry has probably been heard at intervals all winter, ventures the rollicking vernal laughter—though the more tender love-notes wait for March. On the third of February one year, some little school boys in a Kansas town remained indoors at recess. To

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the teacher's natural inquiry about such unnatural procedure, the answer was given, "It is cooler indoors than out on the play-ground!" Far northward from Kansas, February is, sometimes at least, the month when the migrating ducks and geese begin to appear, moving toward the breeding grounds, and when the first bluebirds and robins, forerunners of a greater host, arrive.

The great natural changes of spring would occur if no human being were dwelling on these prairies; but if there are phases of the season for plant, quadruped, insect, rock, river and atmosphere, there are others, from necessity or choice, for man himself. These vary from "spring fever," calling for thoroughwort tea or quinine, through sowing and cultivating, revivals of golf and tennis, to the building of new factories and resumption of railway construction. Dr. Huntington, in the article previously quoted, tells us that in certain occupations 'the curve of efficiency rises from February till about the middle of June,' and that "mental work reaches its highest point at a temperature of 38 degrees, while physical work reaches a maximum at 59 degrees for men and 60 degrees for girls." It follows that some days of the prairie spring ought to be "good days for work"; but should we not be a bit lenient toward ourselves and others in March days when the mercury falls to near the zero point, or rises with slight warning clear into the nineties?

The "Lamp of Memory" illuminates the past of

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our personal experience and the past of our fellow beings who, for over a century, have journeyed across the prairies between February and June, and have recorded what they saw or heard or felt.

How infinitely varied and complex are the spring memories of every individual who has been sensitive to natural impressions! For many, some species of flower or bird may reopen vistas leading far back to the days that are no more. The psychologist may explain; we human beings may endure or enjoy our memories. For one, again the March sun comes out in glory after dismal, foggy days, in New York City. Into the Park stroll countless maids leading little children or drawing baby carriages. There is heard a medley of French nasal sounds, gliding Italian vowels and guttural German consonants. Two English sparrows are busily at work bringing materials for a nest. A robin sings while a group of his kinsfolk scattered over a grassy area are searching for worms. From the bushes come the half-suppressed but wholly entrancing strains of a song sparrow. One solitary patch of snow lingers in the shadow of a stone wall, but is rapidly yielding to the warmth. For another, again the sleet falling over the graves and the monuments of the great dead at Sleepy Hollow; for another, the restless cormorants flying from colonied cliffs to sparkling sea and back from sparkling sea to colonied cliffs at La Jolla; for another, the bees murmuring about the catkins of the willow in the old prairie yard—murmuring to the boy in his

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father's arms, brought into the spring sunshine for the first time after dangerous illness.

For what may be called *social memory,* in distinction from personal memory, we may have recourse to the records of early travelers. It would be an interesting task for someone to gather and collate the seasonal records of all the important prairie ramblers of early days. For the nonce, we must be content with a glance at a few of the pages so carefully edited by the late Dr. Thwaites, and at the second volume of Beltrami's *Pilgrimage,* published in London in 1828.

It was in the spring, chiefly in May, that Maximilian, Beltrami, Edwin James, Brackenridge, and the Lewis and Clark expedition left Missouri to journey up one or the other of the Great Prairie Rivers. Maximilian gives one essentially familiar phase of our prairie May in this description of a storm experienced May 8, 1833, in what is now the south-east corner of South Dakota: "At noon with a temperature of 75 degrees there was a violent wind so that the fine sand from the banks penetrated into the innermost parts of our vessel; the broad river was so agitated by the wind that the pilot could not distinguish the sand banks and we were obliged to lie to. . . . Vivid lightning flashed in the horizon; the rain soon poured down in torrents and at night a storm arose which at midnight raged with such fury that we might have felt some alarm had not our vessel been so well protected by the bank.

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The storm frequently forced open the doors of the upper cabin, and the rain beat into the room. Toward daybreak the tempest returned with increased violence; the flashes of lightning and the claps of thunder were incessant during the twilight and everybody thought that the vessel must be struck."

Beltrami, fluent writer to say the least, sentimentalist in a sentimental period, set forth from St. Louis May 2, 1823, arriving at "Fort St. Anthony, at the confluence of rivers St. Peter and Mississippi" on May 20—by his table a river journey of nine hundred and twenty-five miles. He records that to Prairie du Chien the Indians came in the spring "to settle with their creditors, who receive skins in payment." At a cavern some fifteen miles south of Lake Pepin he saw vestiges of the recent annual spring *lustration* of the savages—their purification "by water and fire."

Edwin James left St. Louis, with Major Long, on May 4, 1820. Of the scenery of the day following, Dr. James writes: "Our path lay through extensive and fertile meadows, stretching away to the distant horizon, and bounded sometimes by the verge of the sky, and sometimes by the margin of a forest. The elk, the deer, and the bison, the indigenous inhabitants of these delightful meadows, had been long since driven away by the incursions of the white settlers, scattered at remote intervals on the borders of the forests. The dense and uniform growth of grass had risen untrodden and uncropped, and was

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now waving with ceaseless undulations, as the wind swept lightly over the surface of the plain. The slender graceful panicles of the heuchera americana, rising above the grass, resembled a grove of spears, bristling above the heads of an embattled host. Along the margins of the brooks, we noticed the beautiful spiræa opulifolia, and a slender species of viburnum, bending under their clusters of snowy flowers." To fancy, this ungathered bouquet of Missouri flowers—alum root, nine-bark and arrow-wood—seems fresh and attractive after the lapse of almost a century. This was no lustration of a savage, but the purification of a devoted nature by the spirit of beauty and the spirit of truth.

*Lawrence, Kansas.*

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## Roses

By Lewis Worthington Smith

I plucked red roses through June's radiant weather
And in them buried lips and eyes and brow.
My love loves roses and still asks me whether
There are no roses now.

In vain I bring her golden-rod and lilies
And regal asters for my pledge and vow.
I know too well how past all help our ill is.
There are no roses now.

I bring her love, but June has passed forever.
Love has new moods. Gray steals above my brow.
She turns her eyes and bids me tell her never
There are no roses now.

In vain I seek the wayside lanes and hollows,
Looking for signs of spring on bush and bough.
Summer is passing and the autumn follows.
There are no roses now.



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## The Pixie

By H. B. Alexander

The young man reclined drowsily in a veranda chair just where the wistaria vine best screened him from the street. With half-shut eyes he studied the clean-cut silhouette of the foliage and noted the delicate veining and tender green of the young leaves against the white glare of the arc-lamp. A blurred murmur from the distant city, like a droning of summer bees, welled and waned in his ears, but there was no other sound. The street beneath the veranda was silent and deserted. The young man was wearied from the heat and hurry of the day, and he drowsed.

Of a sudden,—perhaps he had slept,—he was aware of a dartling scarlet in his eyes, and a soft perpetual patter in his ears like a sound of dancing leaves. He opened his eyes wide and peered through the wistaria foliage. There, scarce a score of feet away, in the full glare of the arc-light was the dancer. A flutter of scarlet she seemed, so swift and ceaselessly astir, but there was a play of lithe brown arms and a flurry of dusky hair besides, and once and again the flash of sparkling eyes. She was but a midge of a girl, maybe nine or ten, but she danced with the grace of a wildwood fairy, and with all the ecstatic abandonment of elfland.

The young man watched and a smile parted his lips. She seemed to float like a flake of crimson



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snow, and he raised his hand as if to stay her from vanishing away. She whirled like a whirling flame, and he held his breath. The trip and tinkle of her sandals on the pavement kept the time of a woodland brook-fall.

The dance stilled and died. A quiver, a thrill,—it was gone, and the dancer with a quick motion of her arms threw back the dusky hair and poised at rest, cheeks flushed and eyes aglow.

"Bravo, Pixie!" he cried, and clapped his hands.

Startled, she retreated, and then with kittenish curiosity crept near again seeking with bright watchful eyes to fathom the shadow of the wistaria.

"Bravo!" he called again, and leaned out over the balustrade that she might see him.

A furtive smile dimpled her cheeks. She raised her bare arm beckoningly.

"Come," she said, "you shall dance, too."

He laughed.

"Come," she repeated, this time gravely.

Her voice was silkily soft but it besought well, and the elfin witchery of her eyes summoned. The young man laughed again, but he laid hold of the balustrade, leapt lightly over it and stood beside her. She smiled up at him, and taking his hand in hers turned down the street.

"Not here—not yet," she said.

She tripped on before and he, mindless of hat or coat, followed after her. At first they traversed the city street,—a shaded suburban street,—but soon

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the scattered houses were left behind and they came out upon an open meadow that spread away into the darkness. The young man paused and looked questioningly toward his guide.

"Not here—not yet," she repeated. "Come!" And she drew him on after her.

The moon was just lifted above the horizon, and as its light fell fair upon them it seemed to wake anew the spirit of the dance in the witch-maid. Her dark eyes gleamed with joy. She tossed her head daintily, and sped away, a veritable will-o'-the-wisp with the moonlight flashing on the fluttered scarlet of her dress.

They ascended a long steep hill which marked the horizon, and as they came to the summit, before them stretched a broad dark band of forest, its crest faintly silvered by glinting reflections of the moon. The young man had known the region well, but he could not recall this forest. He paused once more.

"What's here, Pixie?" he asked.

She shook her head saucily. "Yonder," she said, and pointed toward the forest.

As they entered its shade she waited for him to come up with her and once more took his hand. Then they went on beneath the trees. At first dim filterings of moonlight half showed the way, but soon the trees stood closer and larger and above quite roofed them from the light. The air was heavy but cool, cooler than the open night, and there was a strong odor as of fir and pine. They seemed to be

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walking, too, upon a matting of pine needles, and as he brushed against the branches the young man felt the prickly malice of the foliage. He kept tight hold on the tugging hand in his, awatch for the fitful fire in the dance-maiden's eyes—the one light in the gloom. And she, never pausing, led the way onward despite the blackness and the silence, for there was no sound save the soft pressure of their feet on the forest carpeting.

Presently it began to grow lighter. There were threadings and lacings of light at their feet, and faint glimmerings amid the branches overhead. Soon a pervasive luminousness, like that of early dawn, spread all around. The young man was puzzled, for it seemed rather the light of day than that of the moon which was about to burst upon them.

The forest waned and thinned and the light grew, and then, of a sudden, they emerged into broad day. They were standing at the head of a wide ravine that led by an easy slope straight down to a broad sandy beach of the sea. On either side, stretching far away, rose a rock-cliff wall, crested with dark pine forest. In all its length, so far as the eye might see, the breach where they stood was the only one that led down to the dazzling white seabeach curving beneath like the glittering blade of a scimitar. Beyond, the blue waters sparkled and danced and shimmered, broke into little curling waves with featherings of spray, and crept sleepily up and down the hard-laid sand. Above, the sky was densely blue and the sun white-hot at the zenith.

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Out on the beach, square before them, was a group of dancers. Small, brown-bodied men and women they were; naked but for rough garmentings of skins and furs, and necklaces of shell or teeth; their black hair flying loose, their arms swung free, in the naïve exuberance of their dance. Beside them, squatted, were the elders, beating in rude rhythm rough-made tambourines and tom-toms, clapping with their hands, or striking rattling sticks. And all were crooning a strange barbaric melody, with the words guttural and half-articulate.

The young man gazed astonished, but she who had led him thither still urged him by the hand.

"See! We are as they," she cried. "Let us dance!"

He looked, and it was as she said. Both were brown-bodied savages in wild dress of fur. She smiled, her odd, dimpling smile, and there seemed to him something anciently familiar in it, and in the flash of her white teeth. He laughed assent, and together they ran on to join the dancers.

The new-comers were not noticed as they joined the circling motion, and it seemed to the young man not strange. The spirit of the dance was upon him, and hand in hand with the Pixie he whirled to the beaten rhythm. And she breathlessly cried up to him:

"It is the dance to the Mother of Life, the Giver of Food, the Great Sea! And the song is a song to the sea!"

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Then he remembered. The guttural harshness of the words was lost to him and he knew them as of old.

Dance, O ye braves, to the Sea!
Ye maids, to your Mother, the Sea!
She spawneth the feast ye shall eat;
She fatteth the strong food and sweet!
Feed us, O nourishing Sea!
The brown yearling babe be your fee,
Giver of Life and of Meat!

The dance grew swifter. The drums beat faster. The words of the song were merged and lost in the chirruping, barbaric cries of the dancers. Round and round they whirled, their brown bodies glistening in the sun. Some of them caught up fragments of shell and cut and gashed their breasts till the flowing blood sprinkled the sands of the beach—a savage libation to the sea.

How long the dance lasted the young man did not know, for he felt only its delirium and insensate joy. But suddenly, once and again, was uttered from the way of the cliff-wall a sharp shrill cry which clean-cleft the turmoil of the dancers. And close upon it followed a crashing and a thunder, and a trembling of the earth beneath their feet. He turned toward the forest. There at the mouth of the breach the trees were bending and snapping as if mere twigs, and through them burst the shaggy auburn hulks of

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huge beasts with tusks like great beams of ivory curled high aloft. Terrified, deafened by the bellow and roar of their rush, the young man stood still.

"Run! Run! Run!"

He heard the Pixie's scream and he felt her fierce pull at his arm. He turned and fled away. All his companions of the dance had vanished, save only she. It was but a little way across the path of the on-coming herd, to the shelter of the rock-cliff wall, but they were barely past when the rush of beasts swept by on the way to the sea. Still they did not pause but fled on down the beach. Breathless they came to a cavernous rent in the face of the rock, black and yawning. The Pixie entered without slack of speed, and he followed. Almost at once they were swallowed in darkness, but the floor was smooth and sandy, and a wind blowing in their faces led them the open way. In a few moments a light appeared, faint and flickering and far beyond. They ran on toward it, and as they neared, the young man beheld a circle of brown-bodied men squatted about a fire. Even as he saw them they seemed to hear the running feet. They sprang up, seized spear and club and thong-bound hatchet, and with cries and gesticulations turned towards the intruders. The young man strove to check his pace. He stumbled and plunged forward. For an instant there was a whistling and a whizzing in his ears, as of hurled weapons, but it sounded faint and dim and far away. The fire, too, and the threatening savages seemed

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suddenly to recede into deep distances, and then vanished altogether.

The young man opened his eyes. He was lying on his back amid dewy grass. By his side crouched the Pixie. Her hands were clasped about her ankles; her knees were drawn up, her chin resting upon them. Her dusky hair hung wearily about her face, white and pale in the night light. Her eyes were sad and moody. All the fire was gone from them now, and the merry mockery from her lips.

The moon hung low in the west, large and red, as if wrapped in city smoke; and faintly could be heard the drone of distance-mellowed city noises. In the other direction, down the slope of the hill, stretched the dark line of strange forest, with the glinting of moonlight on its foliage. And to their ears, from afar, far off, came a sound of trumpetings and a splashing of waters as from the play of mighty monsters in the sea.

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# The Drama League of America

By Malcolm G. Wyer

In 1911 a play produced in New York City was a failure from the first performance. The manager was convinced that the play was a worthy one, the company was well selected and everything had been done to insure the success of the production. This misfortune was ascribed to a variety of causes, among them the fact that the theater in which the play appeared was no longer popular, and that strong competition on the first night had attracted the most influential dramatic critics. But whatever the causes, the failure was complete and arrangements were made at once to withdraw the play. A few evenings before the final performance, three men, a novelist, a playwright and a writer of books about the drama, happened into the theater, and all were so struck with the dramatic strength of the play that they determined it must not fail. Although they easily interested a number of their friends and gained some publicity for the play, it was too late to change the tide in New York, and so they appealed to the manager to give the production a trial in another city. These men were unacquainted with the author and were wholly disinterested, and their enthusiasm and faith in the play were so great that the manager consented, and at their suggestion agreed to send the play to Chicago for one week. At once the three enthusiasts placed the facts



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before the Chicago Center of the Drama League of America. The play was bulletined in advance and highly recommended by the League. When *Kindling,* by Charles Kenyon—for this was the play—opened in Chicago, it was to a crowded house and for fifty weeks it was acted to profitable houses in every part of the United States.

Good plays of course constantly fail and bad plays succeed; and failure would certainly have been the fate of *Kindling,* regardless of its merits, had not the faith of the three enthusiasts been able to enlist the aid of an organization whose purpose is to deliver an appreciative audience for plays worthy of serious support.

For this is one purpose of the Drama League of America, organized in Chicago less than five years ago as the result of the efforts of the Drama Club of Evanston. The founders of the League were impressed with the influence of the theater in the social life and with its educational importance. They felt that the theater, because of this influence upon the people and especially upon the young, should be more generally recognized as a matter of public concern; that it should be a practical civic aim to separate the good in the theater from the evil that is more prominent; because, as Dr. Richard Burton says: "If we pay no attention to the sort of pabulum we offer this vast throng which, millions strong a week, turns for pleasure, rest, refreshment and romance to the playhouse, then much that is offered

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will be not helpful but vicious, undoing all the good effects of home, school, library and church."

Indifference to the theater, denunciation of it, or occasional condemnation of a particular play will have no permanent effect, nor can much general benefit result from the small repertory theaters of high class in one or two large cities. Improvement of conditions will come only from a united, nation-wide, constructive movement, and the aim of the Drama League of America is to accomplish this result by banding together the forces in all parts of the country interested in the drama, and by uniting these forces for the support of better plays; the underlying idea of the League being that those who attend the theater control the future of the drama, and that better plays will come only as the public demands them and supports them. The League believes that there is a strong demand for clean, wholesome, worthwhile plays, but that haphazard, undirected theater going gives this demand little opportunity to voice itself. The Drama League does not quarrel with the manager when he says that he gives the people just what they want or demand, and when he points to the New Theater as evidence that he understands what the people want better than do the drama reformers. It recognizes the manager's viewpoint and the risks he must take, and so devotes its energy to organizing the existing demand for a better drama, and to increasing this demand by stimulating the interest in dramatic study and the reading of plays.

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The practical common sense of the League's purpose and efforts has met an instant and universal response throughout the country, and the enthusiastic supporters include business and professional men, teachers and professors, dramatists, actors and theatrical managers. Already with an affiliated membership of one hundred thousand the League is working constructively for better things, has formed in cities all over the country coherent groups of genuine influence, is furnishing advance information concerning good plays, is urging upon members the support of them, and is offering this ticket buying patronage to managers who will present worthy plays. Mrs. Fiske has said, "This movement of the Drama League is splendidly sensible and helpful. It does not seek to uplift the stage or do any other absurd and unnecessary thing. Its aim so far as I understand it is simply to encourage and support the best in plays and in acting and it is going about its business in the most direct and sensible way."

In more than thirty cities of the country, Drama League Centers have been formed to further, in each locality, the purposes of the League. To all members of each Center a bulletin is issued recommending each worthy play that is produced locally. Where approval of a play cannot be given, no bulletin is issued. The bulletin gives information about the nature of the play and appraises the play and the company; thus each member has authoritative knowledge of the best plays to see and is saved the

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expense and disappointment of experimenting. For instance, in Chicago recently over one hundred and fifty plays were produced in one year. Musical comedies, of which there were one hundred, do not fall within the scope of the bulletin, and of the fifty plays remaining, only sixteen were bulletined. The bulletins are sent to over fifteen thousand members in the different Centers and are also posted in clubs and in libraries. The League is not committed to any one form of play, and these bulletins support tragedy, comedy, farce and melodrama, if only they are good of their kind. The value of the bulletin is that it is selective and uncommercial, while the newspapers must not discriminate, and that it is the report of a group of independent, intelligent playgoers who are trying to represent the general public.

The League is actively working for the education of appreciation in drama, and the most far reaching of its educational activities is the stimulus being given to amateur acting, especially among the children. It is by participation in the drama that an appreciation can best be developed, and the League is furthering the interests of amateur productions in every possible way. An annotated list of plays suitable for amateur acting has been published; advice in regard to plays and the staging of them, and concerning all problems of amateur presentation, is freely given. In all Centers work with children is being done; in Washington, a House of Play for children's acting has been established, where groups

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of children give plays under competent direction; in Chicago, five workers are employed to encourage and direct children's plays in playgrounds and settlements. The hope of the future rests in the development of acting among amateurs and children; for unless we can build up a taste for the best in drama through an intimate acquaintance with it, the organized audience will not be forthcoming.

The most significant and promising phase of the League's work, however, is in what it is doing for one night stands. The officers of the League realized from the first that their greatest opportunity for service to better drama in America was to arrange for the production of good plays, well acted, in circuits of one night stands. With the practical common sense that is the foundation of the League's success, an experienced theatrical manager, familiar with the problems of the one night theater and its audience, was secured to work out the plan of the guaranteed audience. Last year in twelve or fourteen towns where sufficient pledges could be had for tickets to a series of plays, the Drama League arranged a tour of four different companies. The tours arranged were George Arliss in *Disraeli,* The English Repertory Company, The Irish Players and Mrs. Fiske. This experiment is but the beginning of the policy of the League to establish a chain of towns from coast to coast, where, through the League's influence and support, managers will bring productions of a higher class than could otherwise be

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secured for those places. The manager of one of the companies making the Drama League circuit said: "This is really the big work of the Drama League—your big opportunity—and if we coöperate we may bring about the renaissance of the Drama."

In spite of its promising beginning grave dangers are before the League; standards in the judgment and recommendation of plays must be fixed; the Centers must work harmoniously and must extend the influence of the League to the small towns and rural districts; the united support of the actors, the managers and the theater going public must be gained without lowering ideals; and above all, members must show their enthusiasm by buying tickets as well as by attending meetings.

With the public intelligently supporting the theater all else will follow. As Dr. Richard Burton, President of the Drama League of America, writes in *The New American Drama:* "And above all must we hang on to the idea that the theater is our creature, the public's; we made it, we keep it alive, we can control it, if so we will. . . . And let us train ourselves to understand it, to patronize it aright, to relate it to school and society, in place of an aloof position of indifference and hypercriticism, with its blame heavy on manager and actor. In a word let us seek to furnish an intelligent audience and thus make certain a legitimate drama and a theater so enlightened that it shall be a national asset."

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# The Midland Library

*Tales of the Trail: a Book of Western Verse* is a volume of humorous dialect verse by James W. Foley, who has been called "the poet laureate of North Dakota." E. P. Dutton and Company are the publishers.

Of interest to members of women's literary clubs is the publication of a one-act drama, *Solomon's Court,* written by Faye Nixon Speer of Indianola, Iowa. It was first presented in Indianola and afterward issued in booklet form by the Civic Committee of the Woman's Club in that city.

A fourth edition of Francis Fisher Browne's well-known work, *The Every-day Life of Abraham Lincoln,* has recently appeared. This is the result of the last literary labor of its author, whose work as editor of *The Dial* for the last third of a century has been of the highest importance to the region of the Middle West, as well as to the nation at large. Browne and Howell Company are the publishers.

John P. Morton and Company of Louisville, Kentucky, have recently published a new volume of the work of the late Madison Cawein, entitled *The Poet and Nature and The Morning Road.* The wholesomeness and sweetness of this book are in pleasing contrast with much of our sociological and psychological poetry. Perhaps the children in the prose portions of *The Poet and Nature* are a bit unchildlike; but the glimpses into Cawein's note-book are fascinat-

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ing, and occasionally the interspersed poems rise to the perfect mood of the sonnet on the old house:

"Here Summer seems a placid face asleep,
And the near world a figment of her dreams."

The second portion of the book, *The Morning Road,* is a collection of new nature poems, characterized by vivid description and easy rhythms. The Kentucky poet has done lasting service in his life-long devotion to the beauty of our region. Truly he has travelled

"a road on which new Beauty walks
With every Commonplace of life."

The Middle West must sorrow that his journey is so soon finished.

Edwin L. Sabin, in *Kit Carson Days,* has told for us anew the tale of Kit Carson,—pioneer, Indian fighter, explorer, scout, soldier, citizen. Born on Christmas day, 1809, in Kentucky or North Carolina, Christopher Carson was one of the long list of Scotch-Irish emigrants from the Allegheny region. He was born to be a wanderer; for of him and his seven brothers it is written: "Every one, without a single exception, went west in search of the Indian and the buffalo." In thirty-eight chapters the story of his life is told; a final chapter, consisting of a most sympathetic and conservative characterization of the man, completes a biography of more than five hundred pages. An interesting document in the lengthy appendix is the Carson will, drawn May 15, 1868, eight days before the death of Carson. Valuable notes on the individual chapters are appended at the close of the volume; and the whole is carefully indexed. The illustrations deserve special mention. More than eighty of these, gathered from far and near, add a quaint

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dignity to the volume. The author has done well; for he has pictured for us a character in many respects akin to Leather Stocking, in a spirit not less sympathetic than that of Cooper himself. The volume will be of value to the student as well as to the casual reader. A. C. McClurg and Company are the publishers.

The literature devoted to the American Indian is slowly coming into its own. Since the classic work of Parkman and the absorbing pseudo-fictitious productions of Irving, there has been published much pertaining to the romantic "red man." Interest in the subject is continually on the increase; and any books that appear now-a-days bearing the impress of careful and scholarly work are heartily welcomed. Alanson Skinner's *The Indians of Greater New York* is a work in a field which has heretofore been for the most part untouched save in monographs of a somewhat restricted nature, or in documents and papers included in the early archives of the state of New York. The time covered is the period before the coming of the English; and the early records of New Amsterdam, New Orange, and New York were studied in the preparation of the volume. A bibliography completes a book of first importance. Another important addition to the study of Indian life is Dr. Walter Hough's *The Hopi Indians*. Dr. Hough has been for years a close student of the aborigines of the Southern border, and it may not be too much to say that he ranks first among American students in this particular field. The book is a careful study of the life of the Hopi Indians in both town and country, including their amusements, their religion, their traditions, and their mythology. These books are both announced for early publication by the Torch Press.

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# The Midland Chronicle

In the current number of *Poetry* a group of poems by Edith Wyatt is especially worthy of mention. The suggestive imagery of *Clover,* the delightful personal touch of the nature-love in *April Weather,* and the music and picturesqueness of *On the Great Plateau* single these three out as the best of the collection. Miriam Allen de Ford's *The Musicmaker's Child* contains pleasing touches of color and melody in a weird setting, although it is technically a rather roughly hewn piece of work. *The Wanderer,* by Zoë Akins, demonstrates that a beautiful and fitting expression of feeling is not always throttled by brevity and rhythmic regularity of verse. On the whole the January issue of *Poetry* is noticeably above the average of its recent predecessors.

The South has been chosen as the field for discussion in *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* for December, 1914. In an exceedingly well-written article on *Richard Henderson and the Occupation of Kentucky, 1775,* the author, Archibald Henderson, makes this significant statement concerning his ancestor: "If George Rogers Clark was 'the Hannibal of America,' if Daniel Boone was her Marco Polo, Richard Henderson was her Cecil Rhodes." The ante-bellum contest between Southern Whig and Southern Democrat over the question of the abstract right of secession is admirably portrayed by Arthur C. Cole in an article on *The South and the Right of Secession. Historical Activities in the Old Southwest* is the title of a valuable article by St. George L. Sioussat. Clarence E. Carter writes on *Some Aspects of British Administration in West*

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*Florida. William Clark's Journal of General Wayne's Campaign in Ohio* is printed in full under the head of *Notes and Documents.*

The January issue of *The Miscellany* completes Volume One of this pleasing little magazine, and is not inferior to its predecessors in interest or attractiveness. It is introduced by Part I of *A Visit to Franz von Bayros,* by Winward Prescott. The Townley series on *The Bookplates of Horace Walpole and his Contemporaries* is completed, and notes of interest to collectors of books and bookplates are appended. The editor remarks: "Thus we complete our first volume. Viewing it retrospectively we see a wide field for improvement; a field that has not been wholly barren of the fruits envisaged at its conception and yet one offering broad opportunity for further development." It is a matter of encouragement and inspiration that so creditable a publication is finding place in the Middle West.

Prominent among the contributions to *The Mid-West Quarterly* for January, 1915, are the following: *Joseph Chamberlain, the Radical,* by Cephas D. Allin; *The Renaissance,* by E. Benjamin Andrews; *American Traits as Seen by the French,* by George D. Morris; and *Emerson as a Romanticist,* by Louise Pound. *Giosuè Carducci,* by Ruth Shepard Phelps; *Sociology and the Law,* by Arthur W. Spencer; and *The Mantle of Browning,* by Hardin Craig, complete the number.

The forthcoming number of *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* will contain an article on *The Early History of Lead Mining in Iowa,* by Jacob Van der Zee; and a discussion of *The History of Text-book Legislation in Iowa,* by O. E. Klingaman.

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# The Midland

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## The Literary Revolution

In the February number of *The English Journal,* Mr. F. C. Tilden explains with uncommon distinctness the literary theory of modernists who absolutely or relatively disregard the past.

Whether this newest theory is true or false, Mr. Tilden thinks that school work in literature must be guided by it because it is generally accepted. "The schools, lower and higher, must take upon themselves the task of fitting men for efficient entry into business. And it is implied again that the old education of culture and discipline has not and cannot fit men for this special work." "The classic languages, mathematics, a required curriculum" have failed to stand the test, it seems. Literature, the last trench of the old order, is doomed or already lost. "I talked recently with a group of students in engineering from one of our greatest technical colleges. These men were taking journalism and language in addition to their technical work, but no literature. Finally one of them said scornfully: 'We are here for work. We have no time for that woman's club



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stuff.' The rest nodded their heads in affirmation." The editor of *The Saturday Evening Post* is quoted as expressing similar scorn of "a sort of sublimated pudding, to be eaten with delicate relish by the privileged few."

Mr. Tilden concludes that "Literature taught as a 'thing of beauty and a joy forever' will not reach the practical man;" and the practical man is the man "worth while." "To reach modern men it is necessary to project the thing that is to reach them into the circle of their intellectual interest." The teacher must relate literature to "journalism, economics, law, medicine, the practical things." "I believe that to appeal to boys, young men, and old men of the present day active and practical intelligence, literature must be related very definitely and closely to the intellectual life they live." "At present, literature, both ancient and modern, is losing ground. The man of the world cares nothing for it." If literature is to be saved, and the teacher of literature incidentally, "we must enter upon an active campaign."

For this active campaign, Mr. Tilden wisely chooses modern writers as projectiles into or against the "constantly growing intelligence" of the man worth while. Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare would flatten to mere annoying blotches upon the steely surface. Say not to the editor of *The Saturday Evening Post:* "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."

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Even an active campaign will not help the heavens, God or the firmament in this case.

Rather, as Mr. Tilden recognizes: "It will not do to say that old literature is an interpretation of life today. Any literature written in a past age looks upon life from the standpoint of that age. The farther back in time the more nebulous, misty, and inaccurate is the interpretation of the present. It is only the blindness of the critic, his utter failure to appreciate the life of his own time, that makes possible the conventional statement that literature may be universal in its interpretation."

As Mr. Tilden says, it will not do. "Where there is no vision the people perish" is a bit of phrasing once good enough; but Solomon, nebulous, inaccurate Solomon, must keep his place "farther back." The active campaign is not for his hopeless cause or that of the misty Socrates. "The modern world that reads its magazine and gets its pleasure, its knowledge, and its inspiration therefrom has little patience with the statement that its taste must be cultivated." The impatience of the modern world is but natural, if such a statement has been made; "must" is a harsh expression. If we want *The Cosmopolitan* taught to us rather than Plato and Shakespeare, *The Cosmopolitan* it shall be.

The modern world, the world of "wireless telegraphy, rapid transit, high explosives and nervous tension" is not "in love with a literary form that was made to appeal to the lazy, leisure-loving, aris-

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tocratic Greek." Our high explosives do works that he never dreamed of doing; and we, with our nervous tension, prefer rapid transit to the lazy building of a Parthenon. Our interests, if we are modern and worth while, are typically "business" and "reform;" business for ourselves, reform for others,—the centripetal and centrifugal forces being admirably balanced. The literature of David, of Shakespeare, we cannot abide. We want business, politics, rapid transit, reform, nervous tension, high explosives; in short, we want the magazine.

"Writers in the periodicals are insisting constantly that the criticism of the professional critic is of no value to the general reader. The fact that students in our colleges, especially young men, interested in sociology, economics, agriculture, engineering, construction, and business are taking less and less of literature is again a reflection upon the work of the professional critic as teacher." The teacher of literature manifestly must not be a professional critic; that is, he must not teach literature. His task, though hazardous, is not utterly impossible. He may teach magazines, those that are not literature in any older and obnoxious sense. He may venture to present material even in cloth covers if the text be not sublimated pudding and if the teaching be literary criticism denatured. "Students of socialism, politics, and economics find in Tolstoi, William Morris, Galsworthy, and Zola tremendous intellectual stimulation." To bring about this de-

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lectable state, the teacher must tactfully suppress any suspicion in his students that there is an "aesthetic appeal" in these writers; "the world today is laying the emphasis upon other values and points of view." "A course in the evolution of metrical forms is not one-half so good a preparation for the teaching of Keats and Shelley as a course in the economics of the early nineteenth century." Two courses in economics would surely be better than one course; would, in fact, be rather more than four times as good as a course in the evolution of metrical forms. The ideal will be attained when Keats is taught by an economist; or rather when the economist teaches *The Cosmopolitan.*

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## Lines to a Wood Thrush

By Irving N. Brant

Begin, fore-runner of the lovely morn,
Sweet haunting recluse, faerily forlorn,
Begin, and tune my temper to thine own,
Till river, hill, and shadowy glade are flown,
And fading night sinks in the arms of day,
Unknown, unnoticed, in thy vocal sway.
Sing on! Thou charmer of the pallid stars!
Even as thou wert at the golden bars
Of heaven, thy song is of redeeming love,
Crowning the anthem of the choir above.
O messenger of peace and tenderness,
Let thy soft notes the yearning wind caress
That steals no sweetness from the nodding flowers
To match thy rarity of liquid powers
Of song. To whom, O spirit, singest thou?
Is't to thy Maker thine aerial vow
Is offered? Or is't to the joy of life,
That thou dost have no bitter care nor strife



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To dim the beauties of thy natural world?
Dost sing of morning and of twigs dew-pearled?
Or does thy russet mate inspire in thee
The essence of thy wandering melody?

Thou art alive with Nature for a day.
Where is thy song when skies are dull and gray,
When earth is heavy with the garb of death,
And here and there the leaf-throng wandereth
Seeking a place to lie? Like us they rest
Or soon, or now, on their cold mother's breast.
Yet thou wilt sing above them with no thought
Except of life; what was concerns thee not.

Then sing of life, that life may drift away
Amid the unwept joys of yesterday;
And thy hushed tones when summer bloom is fled
Shall be a voiceless requiem o'er the dead.

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# A Gun

By R. O'Grady

No wonder he felt that penny burning in his one good pocket—it was of such a fiery new brightness, and the all-day suckers, just visible through the blurred shop-window, seemed fully an inch longer than any he had ever beheld.

All at once he drew himself up to the full of his short height and executed an impromptu swagger, which was capably done. From the shop door there had emerged a squat, stubby-nosed little girl, absorbed in titillating her pink tongue with a crisply wrapped stick of prolonged delight.

To be sure, it hardly seemed worth while to pose for that "little fat Comstock girl," but this was an extreme instance. Under the circumstances he might have looked at a boy with frank envy in his indefinitely gray eyes; but he would be loath thus to confess himself to a member of the weaker sex. He rammed his freckled, black-nailed fist into his one good pocket, and gripped the penny tight, while he blew an abortive whistle through tensely puckered lips. The cranium under his bobbing, reddish curls did full justice to his five-and-a-half years, and he decided it would be unmanful to slink away.

So, when the Comstock girl, with her odd vocal mimicry of a stout matron, queried: "Why don-che buy you-self a sucker, Hen-nery?" he opened his



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mouth and emitted the most purely masculine sound in his repertoire, which was a disdainful, if somewhat equivocal, "A-a-aw!"

"The little fat Comstock girl"—who was occasionally called "Sadie" for short—looked at him with squint-eyed impregnability.

"I got-ta way to suck mine so's it'll last two days," she informed jerkily, demonstrating the assertion between syllables with the nicety of a kitten lapping cream.

"A-a-aw!" ejaculated Henry the second time, while his head swam and his mouth watered as he struggled in the grip of an overpowering temptation.

Two days—two whole days of unremitting ecstasy! An antidote for ache and hunger, a consolation for insult and grief—a sweet morsel under the tongue for two whole days! He jerked his hand from his pocket, and for an instant something bright glinted in his open palm. Then he turned abruptly on his dust-ground bare heel and started off.

"My big brother—he gave you to that new penny!" With this bit of wheezy but matter-of-fact information, Sadie also strolled away in the opposite direction, her thick, stubby braid protruding at a sharp angle from her bowed head, as she luxuriatingly sampled her prize.

The little boy's head was also bowed, but from a different cause. He was thinking. It was just like a girl to find it out, though Sadie had not been present when it happened. Sadie's big brother—

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late returned from lands so distant that he had come on the railroad—*had* given him the new penny; yet never was hero medal more gallantly earned.

Since the Comstocks lived, as the O'Neil children were wont to put it, "in the other side of our house," no event so ebullient as the return of a big brother could fail to penetrate partitioning walls. The five little O'Neils, however, conforming to an unwritten law of the place, had kept pretty well to their own side. It was when to the lure of a masculine voice was added the unfamiliar and seductive smell of fresh-baked sweets, that small Henry O'Neil succumbed.

A round, freckled face, adorned by the mere dab of a nose and topped by reddish curls, was inserted venturesomely in the savory aperture of the Comstocks' kitchen door.

"Maw says,—Mis. Cumstick," wavered a small and guilty voice, "Maw, she says—" Then, after an awful, cheek-burning moment, a brilliant inspiration—"Maw, she says what time it is—?"

"Come in here—you cub!" roared the important one, who stood at his fond, proud mother's table devouring his proud, fond mother's cookies. "Come here!"

From sheer, startled wonder, Henry obeyed. Making his bare-footed, apologetic advance towards the center of the room, he counted three doomed cookies as they vanished into the important one's grinning, white-toothed mouth. Then he gripped the table in faint and watery-eyed desire.

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"I say, Kinks," gulped the important one as soon as he could speak again, "want-a-cooky?"

Henry grinned weakly but broadly.

Mrs. Comstock turned about from the oven with a piping panful gathered up in her apron. She was a very much enlarged edition of Sadie, all bulk, no color, with a projecting nubbin of broom-straw hair.

"Bless yuh," panted Mrs. Comstock, "have a hot one." And she took from the pan a steaming cake to make good her invitation.

"Go slow there, maw!" interrupted the important one, even as Henry extended eager fingers. "Say, kid—" The young man had then reached in his pocket producing this very penny. Once more Henry took it out and looked at it, while he scuffed his reminiscent way along the littered pavement. "Say, kid," the important one had pursued, "honest to goodness, now, wouldn't you rather have this penny?"

Mrs. Comstock, with a laugh that made her chin look like a pile of sausage links, switched her darling indulgently with the corner of her towel, and adjured him not to tease the child. But he put her aside.

"Eh?" he demanded grimly of the agonized Henry.

And Henry thought steadfastly of the gun and stammered, "Yessir," cupping his palm to receive the glittering coin.

The gun! Henry had now reached the shop where

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a dozen of these wooden toys bristled in the window like an entire scouting line. Away with feminine love of sweets and savory bakery stuffs! To possess a gun was to be a man. To pull a trigger, to see a flash, and hear a crack that would kill bears and make girls jump and scream, was to be a hero. And Henry had fought the first step. Only four more pennies and a dime and the gun would be his, with a box of "schussion" caps to boot. That's what the man had said.

No matter that Mrs. Comstock had called him back and given him two cookies instead of one, laughing harder than ever. The victory was his. Besides, he had taken the extra cooky to Jane, and showed her the penny behind the door where William and Fenimore couldn't see. Jane, in spite of her two-and-a-half years' seniority, and the handicap of being his sister, was nevertheless his "pal."

A penny's limitations—that was a cruel shock. For Jane had finally made him understand the finiteness of a penny's purchasing power. Four more, and a dime he must have before he could buy the gun.

Still, he was getting on; the renunciation of an all-day sucker had been comparatively easy. Now it only remained to find a job.

"Only but girls and babies suck suckers!" he muttered to himself, as with his left hand deep in his one good pocket and his right nonchalantly thrust into a hole in his pantaloons, he quickened his pace up the littered street.

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He was going in the opposite direction from his home; away from the happy-go-lucky region where small shop-keepers sat about on empty crates, enjoying the mild October air, into streets where tall buildings shadowed clean-swept pavements and store windows shone like crystal. Here it would be a simple matter to earn four pennies, to say nothing of a dime, for he would try in every store. . . . . No, not every one, for some were so bewilderingly crowded with people, and in others the men behind the counters looked so discouragingly dry and grim that Henry, having dodged inside, just as quickly dodged out again.

But a career must have a beginning. At last he was facing a tall, sallow man with a caustic stare that Henry seemed to feel right through the top of his cap. He had launched his project, however, and there was no retreat.

"I—I'll—say, mister—I'll sing for a penny—"

"What's that!"

"I'll—si—sing for—"

The boisterous laugh that interrupted this tremulous offer was not the tall man's, for his straight mouth had only twisted wryly at the corners. The laugh came from a round-faced person near the front, who sat in a kind of pen with a queer, black cup on one eye.

"Look here, youngster!" The round-faced man carefully laid down an open watch. "Singin' 's no commodity in this shop."

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"Huh?" the interrogation, though puzzled, was primarily resentful, for Henry had been laughed at: the worst ignominy that could befall a self-respecting boy. Yet the desperate need that had driven him here inspired him with dogged persistence. He edged toward the cage.

"We'd rather pay you *not* to sing," elucidated the round-faced man.

Was this a rebuff or a proposal? Henry's ears were burning, his heart pounding; yet, he still thought of the gun. He felt the lonesome penny in his one good pocket, with passable facility he adjusted his other hand in the hole in his pantaloons.

"Well, sir," he demanded, lifting his head, "how much'll y' gim-me to not sing?"

The roar, the utter tumult which greeted this tentative bid was so sudden that for the moment shame gave way to panic. In his terror he did not realize the several sources of the derisive outburst, which came from every department of the store, both visible and invisible—even the tall man contributing raucously to the deluge of mirth. The object of it all was out the door, and had wormed his way through the five o'clock crowds of pedestrians for half a block before he awoke to the enormity of the insult which had been offered him. And he was almost home—back in that familiar neighborhood where identical houses, with cracked and stained brick fronts, stood in identical rows, when his lacerated mind again revived to thoughts of the gun.

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The gun! If it had been an airship or a new winter suit, and the four pennies and a dime so many pots of gold, the possibility of its attainment could not have seemed more remote to the mind of the dejected little boy.

Yet he was diverted from his sorrow by the moment's emergency. Having arrived at the corner of the block where they lived, he must begin to count the houses. By this laborious method he would manage to stumble into the home nest—if he didn't miscount. And this evening . . . . one, two, three—he had reached the fourth door—it must be the right place; but as soon as he entered the close, dark hallway, his olfactory sense (which was altogether out of proportion to the size of his nose) was struck by the warm, savory smell of roasting apples.

Baked apples in their house?—apples of any kind!

Forgetting to shut the outside door, he darted forward with a coltish flurry of heels, and ran plump against a strongly built man, who was just coming out, with a dinner pail and a pipe.

To this obstacle Henry clung for an instant, looking up into a pair of round, rather soft and irresponsible eyes.

"Where-a-been, sonny?" mumbled the man, around his pipe.

"Up the street," vouchsafed Henry, which seemed a wholly adequate reply, for the man tweaked his shoulder and passed out with a noise of heavy-soled boots.

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So "pop" was starting for his night's work with his dinner pail and his pipe. It must be children's suppertime. And—baked apples!

Henry burst into the kitchen, slamming the door, and of a sudden his troubles came back. Supper-time, to be sure; granite bowls and spoons ranged around the oil-cloth covered table; little Fenimore already asleep in his high-chair. But whither had vanished the smell? All was irksomely the same as ever.

At the stove, standing on the little box with which she added the necessary cubits to her short stature, Jane onerously stirred the everlasting porridge. That was not what he had scented. For mush never smelled like anything except when it was scorched.

Probably it was burning now; for Nannie, from her station before a tiny mirror on the wall, sniffed with an air of patrician daintiness that seemed ludicrously out of place.

"Jane!" she instructed, "do stir quick! You're too slow!"

Gripping the ladle with both small hands, Jane pushed it frantically back and forth, while Nannie, plying deft and fastidious fingers, poked and pulled and punched into shape the disreputable, ill-matched rosettes that adorned her two brown braids.

Henry resented the older sister's make-believe superiority to Jane. Nannie need not feel so smart because she was past eleven. But there was a way to make her mad. He could call her "Nancy." He

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could do it with right, for Nancy she had been christened, after a remote and disappointing aunt, who had promised a ring and sent only cast-off clothes at long and irregular intervals.

But there was no time for revenge, Henry was so full of something else.

"Jane," he whispered, with a cautious side-look at William, who had got up from his pine sticks on the floor to see what was toward, "Say, Jane, where's the apples?"

"Apples!" panted Jane, still pushing the ladle for dear life.

"I smelled 'em comin' in."

"Well, I guess they gone out again, if they come in—Didn't you know they was over to Cumstick's? —G'way, you'll get scalt!"

With foolhardy persistence, Henry lingered over the seething mush-pot. Everything was at Comstock's these days. This latest disappointment had almost swept away his courage.

"Jane," he quavered, trying manfully to control his trembling, soft little lips, "ain't we got no big brother?"

Jane looked at him with a queer blankness almost driving the flush from her heated face. Then she glanced furtively at their mother, who at that moment came slowly from the bedroom.

"S-s-sh! we uster have—he's runned off," she confessed in a guilty whisper.

"W'y, then—"

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But the confidence was interrupted by "maw," who came to take up the porridge.

"Hustle around there, kids, find yer places!" she invited in a cheerful voice that belied her languid movements. Then, having deputed Nannie to serve the bowls, she sat down to some sewing in the corner of the room.

It was gloomy to have "maw" sit in the corner and sew, especially since the occupation never brought little boys new clothes; only heaps of white things to wonder about.

Henry plowed his spoon in his mush with all the accumulated resentment of the last few hours.

"Where's the sugar?" he demanded.

"Ain't none—shut up!" was Nannie's prompt response.

Henry accepted her challenge.

"Say, what's maw sewin' all the time?" he flung back defiantly, as if realizing that he trod on prohibited ground.

His question fell upon a silence broken only by the click of spoons.

Jane glanced up mutely. Her small face, having cooled since her struggle with the mush-pot, until it looked a bit less like a small, crimson radish, showed the same mystification that Henry felt.

But Nannie, leaning forward across the table, fastened her small brother with the impish triumph of her big, blue eyes.

"None yer business-s-s!" She protruded her

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pink tongue with a hiss on the last syllable, and added: "Now eat yer mush, or let it alone."

Henry preferred to "let it alone." But after he had slept his appetite returned, if not his zest of life. And the next afternoon he sat huddled in the corner of his own doorstep, with a hand in his one good pocket, where the bright new penny had been, and the regretful after-sweet of an all-day sucker on his lips. It had been one glorious debauch of stickiness —a few hours of deceiving brightness, which had been wasted all too soon. For now, the defeat and relinquishment which had been smouldering in his heart were traced upon his cheeks in gummy tears. And to augment this dismal mood, the bottom seemed ready to drop out of the world.

Else why such a queer state of excitement within the house. Why should he have been peremptorily commanded to go out and play, and stay out until he was called? Never was such an indefinite and unwelcome playtime granted him before. But that wasn't all. Mrs. Comstock, having come in from the other part of the house, seemed to be taking charge of things, while "maw" remained in the bedroom; Jane and the two small brothers had been strangely spirited away; and last, but most noteworthy of all these happenings, "pop" (who always slept in the daytime) was up and dressed—without his pipe.

While Henry was thinking gloomily on these things, with all the concentration he could spare from his hopeless longing for a gun, he was present-

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ly diverted by the appearance of a very dressed-up man down the street. The man had reached the corner of their block. And now he seemed to be counting the doors.

He was carrying a square, black satchel. He had come on the railroad—he was somebody's big brother—theirs—maybe theirs!

Henry felt himself growing pale just then, for the man was actually coming up the steps. He passed the quaking, teary urchin in the corner, turned about and looked down.

In that look was the kindly, twinkling interest of forty big brothers.

"Live here, son?" he asked in a voice that drew the little fellow's soul.

"Yessir," returned Henry, with remarkable presence of mind.

"Want a job?"

A warmth suffused the little boy's face, even as his heart leaped up and choked his words. A job—want a job!

"I guess so," the man laughingly interpreted. Then he jingled in his pocket a meditative accompaniment to the humorous dance of his eyes.

Drawing forth his big, clean hand he dropped something into Henry's unwashed palm.

"Ever see a six-legged mule with bells in its ears and a Christmas tree for a tail?" he inquired.

Henry could hardly suppress a giggle, though he endeavored respectfully to shake his head.

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"Well, I'll tell you what you do, little man,"—the man beamed down on the child, while his voice grew still more soft—"you go stand on the corner about five minutes, and count all the six-legged mules that come along. And if you don't see any there, try the next corner. Then, if you don't see any, just walk very slowly to that toy-shop straight down this street and buy yourself what you like most."

Then, with a "so long, little man," the big brother entered the dingy vestibule.

Henry was left standing on the pavement with a large, somewhat palish looking penny in his hand, and a maze of tremendous ideas in his mind. Big brothers, six-legged mules, guns, and Sadie Comstock—all these demanded consideration at once. But Sadie Comstock took precedence because at that very moment she came slowly down the street, walking in the exact middle of the pavement, and interestedly watching her toes.

For the first time in their acquaintance, Henry went to meet his neighbor.

"My big brother's come," he announced, at a distance of five or six yards.

"Huh," panted the imperturbable Sadie, still scowling at her toes. Then, as she came a little nearer, "What d'ee give yuh?"

In speechless triumph Henry opened his tight-shut little fist.

"This here penny," he finally whispered, when Sadie had deigned a silent look.

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But Sadie eyed him with a patronizing squint as she took the coin in her chubby hand. "It ain't no penny," she denied calmly, "it's money, you cub—a silvered quarter—my big brother, he learned me to that."

"A silvered quarter—?" groped Henry, "would —would that be bigger'n four pennies and a dime?"

The doubt expressed in this halting query was not quite dissipated by Sadie's unsmiling disdain. But having borne this—and from a girl—the little fat Comstock girl—he did not shrink from a grizzled shop-keeper's rebuff.

The reward of his courage was a landslide, a wonderful budget of spoils: the gun, two boxes of "schussion" caps, five all-day suckers—one for himself, one for Jane, one each for William and Fenimore, and one for—yes, one for Nannie. In the moment of supreme happiness, a man has no enemy.

Of the bears killed on his way home, Henry had failed to keep track, though they were much more numerous than six-legged mules. He must, of course, kill one more in the shadowy vestibule at home, and then—

But just as he aimed his gun at a particularly dark spot in the corner, the kitchen door opened, and there was Big Brother, on the point of coming out. Then came pop tagging after, in his shirt sleeves, his hair on end and queer, half foolish tremors about his mouth. Pop had once looked almost this way, on a time when he was about to give a whipping to a

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certain little boy. Henry sidled off, afraid that he might be convicted of too much joy—an offence surely worthy of chastisement. But it was not a whipping; for pop was merely shaking hands with Big Brother, and with Mrs. Comstock, who had suddenly emerged from the bedroom, with a basin in her hand, and intense preoccupation in her eye.

"Not a-one too many," pop was declaring, and repeated it in a louder voice: "Not a-one too many."

Mrs. Comstock laughed, her sausage-roll laugh. But Big Brother only smiled, and his eyes seemed to grow more gently serious as he went out the door.

Waiting until the kitchen was cleared of all but pop, Henry took aim and fired a sudden salute behind his parent's back.

"Eh—sonny—?" Pop jumped, and dropped the match he was holding to his pipe. Then, turning about with a boyish light in his round, irresponsible eyes:

"Shoot again, sonny,—fire another—" he jerked his thumb toward the bedroom door—"fire another, there's two of 'em."

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## Impressions and Comments on the Drama in America

By Mrs. Coburn of The Coburn Players

Americans, in the mass, regard the drama as a "show," and woe betide if it does not amuse! The same may be said of the English. The Anglo-Saxon theater has not reached the high standard of the German or French theater because it has not been fostered as an art. The Anglo-Saxon has, nevertheless, recognized the importance of a standard in his art museum and in his music; hence we have, by individuals or by the state, the subsidized art gallery, the opera, and the symphony orchestra. But as yet the drama, which is life itself, must be set before us merely as a "show," not a truth!

Much fine work, however, is being done, through many avenues, for the drama in this country. The study and acting of plays in the schools and universities, and the widespread reading of the drama are doing much to create an audience of responsibility, and to develop an art-conscience. Lack of responsibility on the part of our public toward the insistence upon good drama has a deadly discouraging influence over our native playwright and actor. "All great drama owes its vitality to the fact that its spectator is not a mere passive block, but the living inspiration of the whole play. He is indeed himself the very stage on which the drama is enacted. He



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is more; he is the creator of the play. The spectator, like God, creates a new world and finds it very good. It is his vision, his imagination, the latent possibilities of his soul, that are in play all the time." So says one of our great modern minds.

Traveling through our big United States, I have noticed a rapidly growing appreciation of good music and good pictures, due to two important inventions, the victrola and the lithograph. I am told that the first set of records purchased by the man with a new victrola consists mainly of rag-time. The exception is when the wise salesman has persuaded the trial of one or two discs of good music, say a selection from grand opera or some fine instrumental number. In the latter case the purchaser, returning for a new set of records, rarely selects another rag-time number.

In the past five years the entire character of the art shops has changed, and soft lovely prints of old masters or modern painters have taken the place of the garish, hideous chromos that formerly glared from the windows. I notice this in the smaller towns as well as in the cities. Here is shown the effect of the lithograph.

Oh, for an invention that could reproduce for the drama something of the beauty of the speaking voice and the playing of a great actor presenting the majesty of a great play. Then might the eternal fear of being bored by what is called the classics be forever dispelled! For the spectator, becoming fa-

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miliar with the simplicity of the true "classic" and its significance to his own life,—whether it be written by the Greeks over two thousand years ago, or by Shakespeare, three hundred and fifty years ago, or perhaps by our own splendid American, William Vaughn Moody, ten years ago,—learns to appreciate the real message of the drama and will in time be bored only by the unreal and vulgar imitations which are now too often placed before him in the theaters in a blaze of scenic allurement. He would realize that, although a place for the grotesque and nonsensical might still be allowed to exist in our variety theater, true drama should be more than a "show." In its elements it should have beauty, instruction, and certainly amusement; but it should not exist *wholly* for amusement. He would in time begin to realize that the men and women of Shakespeare are human, and that that is why they live on from century to century. He would begin to feel that although they speak lofty thoughts in beautiful language, wear different costumes from those of our own time, and differ from us in manners and customs, their hearts are the same, their goodness and their badness, their joys and their sorrows, are precisely the same as our own. He will come to know that if it had been otherwise, if these creations had been mere exaggerations of life, we would perhaps never have heard of Mr. Shakespeare; and that it is this quality of truth that makes the great poet "not of an age, but for all time!"

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One of the worst evils of the stage is caused by the support the unthinking public gives to notorious characters who use the drama to exploit themselves. This verifies my first statement that the drama is looked upon as a "show." If the public regarded it as an art, such advertisement would not be tolerated. Only the artist would be recognized and encouraged. The art of acting might then be separated in the minds of the people from spectacular divorce suits and shooting affrays. Our fine sincere men and women of the stage (and there are many of them!), who love and reverence the work, do not care to be known by cheap advertising, and for that reason they very often go unsupported, though they may be actors of the first rank.

This point leads to another, even more serious in its effect upon the development of the drama, because it has its birth in ignorance and its growth in hypocrisy. I refer to American snobbery in art. I, being American-born, feel privileged to say, howbeit with deep regret, that we are a nation of art-snobs. "Made in America" is never the slogan the public asks for our plays or our actors, and foreign plays and foreign actors are patronized and approved with greater avidity than our own. I would not be misunderstood in this assertion. We owe an inestimable debt to foreign playwrights and actors. Our achievements of the present are built on those of the past; but in no finer way can we show our appreciation of the foreign works than by encouraging a

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drama of our own. Foreign artists themselves tell us this again and again, and they will have worked in vain if we do not set in art form our own American life. But we are, as a nation, so very young, and we have been so busy developing our political muscles, and so fascinated with the idea of making money, that we have given little thought to the need for artistic self-development. To be amused was all we asked. But now, with our great means and more and more leisure, thanks to labor-saving inventions, we should set ourselves to this joyous task.

I believe that when we get our big creation in art, whatever its medium, it will come from your great Middle West. We of the East, particularly in New York, are too cosmopolitan to express America truthfully. Only nineteen per cent of the population of New York City is American born. The eyes of New York are so steadily set upon European art that they have few glances for the American artist unless he be first approved by the Old World. It seems a pity that this country should persistently allow New York to form its tastes by foreign influence alone. So long as this force controls the art output, just so long shall we, as Americans, go unexpressed and without tradition.

Life is so big in itself that it is only when a specific bit of it is placed before us, through one medium of art or another, that we are able to see the whole clearly. The actor, by the very nature of his work, must lead an isolated life. First of all, his work

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hours are the leisure hours of the rest of the world. He sees little but the hotel and the theater. Seldom does he know any of the people of the community in which for the time he is placed. That is a pity, for he comes with a message, a fine influence (or would so come if the community would demand it), and a force that should enrich the life of every one of his hearers. He should be as valued as the minister, the doctor, or the lawyer.

If I may be personal for a moment, I will say that I believe it has been the privilege of The Coburn Players to touch more closely the lives of the American people, perhaps, than any other company of actors. First of all, our coming has been made possible through the influence of one of the leading members of a school, or college, or university, or perhaps a prominent citizen—man or woman—has invited us to come. This endorsement by a helpful and important member of society (using the word in its broader, finer sense) establishes confidence, and the community at once feels a sense of security. We arrive and are received in a hospitable manner. In many instances we are asked to the homes; we talk with the people, we hear what they think and feel, and for a time we are actually a part of their lives. By this contact we are also able to get to the people the human side of the actor, and he is now no longer a mere puppet to the audience. This in turn has a fine influence for the standard of the players.

Percy MacKaye has set forth in his book, "The

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Civic Theater," many helpful plans for the development and support of the drama in America. It might not be amiss to give here a bit of his definition. He says:

"The Civic Theater idea, as a distinctive issue, implies the conscious awakening of a people to self-government in the activities of its leisure. To this end, organization of the theater, participation by the people in these arts (not mere spectatorship), a new resulting technique, leadership by means of a permanent staff of artists (not merchants in art), elimination of private profit by endowment and public support, dedication in service to the whole community:—these are chief among its essentials, and these imply a new and nobler scope for the art of the theater itself.

"Involving, then, a new expression of democracy, the civic theater—in the meaning here used—has never existed in the past, and has not been established in the present. An institution, potential though not yet actual, its conception is peculiarly the outcome of present and near future needs in America.

"Fundamentally, then, the civic theater idea is concerned with the problem of leisure: to extirpate the most baneful habit of mature human beings—the habit of 'killing time.' Its object is to fill time, not kill it."

There are many men and women thinking seriously upon this subject. And I do believe the civic

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theater is more than a dream; that in some form, whether established by the state or by private individuals, there will be in the not too distant future, a theater that will foster the best in drama, and that by this theater we shall achieve high and beautiful standards.

I remember the pleasure Mr. Coburn and I had in the State House of Iowa, when we came unexpectedly upon those splendid paintings of pioneer life. There were your great prairies, the loneliness, the desolation to be conquered. Long trains of prairie schooners, the cattle, the Indians, and always the white steadfast faces of the men and women and children in the foreground. Hardships and difficulties beyond description had to be surmounted, and they were ready for them! It was a great inspiration to us and gave us new strength for our work. We felt that we, too, were pioneers—indeed all workers in art in this country are pioneers—and if we are able to bring to our audiences one little mite of beauty and high thinking comparable to the service of those heroic plainsmen, we are well paid for our kind of hardships.

You of the Middle West are in the heart of our nation, and I hope and believe you will best express it. Not until the great pioneer spirit of our country, those glorious men and women with their brave faces set to the courageous task of making this a fair living-place for us, not until they are set down in a living, burning drama by one of us will we as a people be worthy the name of our great fathers.

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# The Midland Library

*Tales and Traditions of the Marais des Cygnes Valley* is one of the titles in volume five of Green's Historical Series. It is published by the author, C. R. Green, of Olathe, Kansas.

Enos A. Mills, the Colorado naturalist and writer, is the author of a new book, *The Rocky Mountain Wonderland,* which is announced for publication this spring by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Alice Brown's *Children of Earth,* the winning play in the competition for the Ames prize, will be published this spring by the Macmillan Company. It was produced recently at the Booth theater, New York City, and has received the unqualified approval of the Drama League of America.

All who are interested in scenic California will enjoy *On Sunset Highways* (Page; illustrated, $3.00 net). In this volume the author, Thomas D. Murphy, turns from old world highways, described in earlier volumes, "to the romantic and peaceful highways of our own Sunset Land." It is, as the sub-title states, "a book of motor rambles in California." The country round about Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey, and San Francisco, and the beautiful Imperial and Clear Lake valleys, are chief among the places visited. The author is successful in



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blending California's romantic past with the vivid realities of the present. In type and format this volume is of surpassing merit. The sixteen illustrations in color, from paintings by California artists, and the forty duogravures from photographs, are highly commendable. A useful index, and a folding map of automobile roads, are included.

Of interest and value to students of the military operations of the Civil War is the volume entitled *Personal Recollections of President Abraham Lincoln, General Ulysses S. Grant, and General William T. Sherman.* The author, Major-General Grenville M. Dodge, who served with Grant and Sherman, is thoroughly qualified to write with authority. The book is published by the Monarch Printing Company, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

If Vachel Lindsay's intention in *The Congo and Other Poems* (Macmillan; $1.25) was, as seems to be hinted in the introduction by Harriet Monroe, to provide for the reader the "Higher Vaudeville," it is to be admitted that little remains to be questioned save the advisability of the contribution. Poetry, at all events lyric poetry, is a "song art." It is not, however, what Miss Monroe suggests, "an art appealing to the ear rather than to the eye;" it appeals through the ear or the eye to the higher emotions of the hearer or reader, and must be balanced in all cases by his intelligence. Measured by this rule, *The Congo and Other Poems* is disappointing. Such poems, however, as *Darling Daughter of Babylon, The Amaranth,* and *An Indian Summer Day on the Prairie,* have in them the true spirit of poetry. These do not need the bolstering of typographical eccentricities, or of such marginal directions to the reader as, "To be brawled in the beginning with a snapping explosiveness, ending in a languorous chant."

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In his latest book, *From Alien to Citizen* (Revell; illustrated, $1.50 net), Dr. Edward A. Steiner of Grinnell College has given us glimpses into his own life which illustrate the process, "planless, involuntary, even automatic," by which America takes her immigrants and "in a generation makes Americans of them." It is a record of high ideals, undeviating purpose, and unfailing determination, leading at last to the best that life offers,—an opportunity for intelligent service to others. The humor and the pathos of the narrative, its striking incidents, its simplicity of diction, and its real human interest, make this autobiography thoroughly readable, while for the student of immigration its value is unquestionable.

No verse of late years has touched more truly and sympathetically the life of the Far West than that of Henry Herbert Knibbs. He has sketched the life of the plains so graphically and with such keen insight into its actual significance, that his verse, like that of Bret Harte, will constitute a valuable record of contemporary life in this western region, apart from its literary value. *Songs of the Outlands* (Houghton Mifflin; $1.25 net), which received earlier mention in this department, is a collection of poems most of which breathe this western spirit. This collection is remarkable for the evenness in the quality of the poems, which range from the care-free spirit of *The Mule-Skinner* to the pathos of *Along the Shore*. These rough songs cannot be said to possess the qualities of great literature; yet they have a story to tell which is worth the telling and worth the hearing.

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# The Midland Chronicle

A prize of one hundred dollars is offered by Miss Kate Oglebay, through the Drama League of America, for the best play for children between the ages of six and sixteen. The play will be chosen from those submitted to the National Committee before June 1, 1915, and must conform to the requirements noted in their recent bulletin.

Three quatrains, written by the late Madison Cawein, appear in the February number of *The North American Review*. They are entitled *Love, Happiness,* and *Adversity*. The simple beauty of *Adversity* is reminiscent of the stanzas of Father Tabb:

"A barren field o'ergrown with thorn and weed
It stays for him who waits for help from God.
Only the soul that makes a plow of Need
Shall know what blossoms underneath its sod."

The February issue of *Poetry* contains verse, good, bad, and indifferent. To quote from the editor's criticism of Arthur Stringer's *Open Water,* some of the contributions "seem too easily written." The poems of Victor Starbuck and Margaret Widdemer, and *The Fisher Lad* by Francis Buzzell, however, have genuine lyric qualities, and there are good lines in Vachel Lindsay's fanciful mosaic, *The Chinese Nightingale. The Palette,* in the department of *Comments and Reviews,* is the first of a series of critical articles by Ezra Pound, entitled *The Renaissance.*



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As we go to press, the first number of Volume II of *The Miscellany* comes to hand. It concludes the interesting series by Winward Prescott, *A Visit to Franz von Bayros,* and introduces a new series by Dard Hunter, dealing with the making of books. The present instalment, *The Lost Art of Making Books,* is a plea for the book harmonious. This "much talked of, but seldom seen" article should be, the author says, "the work of one man alone," who "must be a typefounder and paper maker as well as a printer." This number of *The Miscellany* contains a number of especially pleasing illustrations.

An enlightening and thoroughly common-sense discussion of the business end of play producing is found in the editorial pages of *The Bellman* for February 20. Under the title of *Merchandising Drama,* the writer suggests three causes for the present distressed financial condition of the theatrical manager: over-expensive productions, stupid publicity methods, and shortsightedness in selecting markets. A plea for intelligent business methods concludes with the statement that "until the theatrical business is run more nearly according to the dictates of common sense, no efforts from without are likely to progress far in 'uplifting the stage.'" Other interesting features in late numbers of this journal are: a poem, *Dusk at the Pyramids,* by Clinton Scollard (February 6); *The Northern Hill Country,* a beautifully illustrated article on the Canadian Rockies, by Aubrey Fullerton (February 13); and *The First Battle in the Skies,* by Dane Coolidge, an account of the first use of flying machines in actual warfare—a year before the outbreak of the European war (February 20).

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# The Midland

A MAGAZINE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

VOLUME I APRIL, 1915 NUMBER 4


## Katharsis

(Sonnets on the War)

By JOHN G. NEIHARDT

I

Who pray for calm, abhorring flood and fire,
Would shun the purging and espouse the blight.
Lo, in the marshland where the tempest's might
Has raged not, how life's meaner forms aspire!
How breeds and skitters in the fetid mire
Spawn reminiscent of the primal light!
What saturnalias of the parasite
Where corpse-lights ape the elemental fire!

Disaster, riding on a thunder-smoke,
Serpents of flame upon his forehead set,
Hurls the black legions of cyclonic strife!
We trace his progress by the shattered oak,
Bewail the wasted centuries—and yet,
The land shall quicken to a cleaner life.

II

They do but take the ancient bath again,
And shall emerge unto a saner peace.

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Lo, how they made a fetich of caprice,
And worshipped with aberrant brush and pen!
What false dawns summoned by the crowing hen!
How toiled the lean to batten the obese!
What straying from the sanity of Greece
While yet her seers and bards were fighting-men!

A canting generation, smug in greed,
With neurasthenic shudders, suavely wroth,
Bemoans the ruin of Icarian wings!
Lo, latent in its luxury, the Mede;
Potential in bland cruelties, the Goth—
Stern teachers of the fundamental things!

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## An Amateur Interview

By A. Starbuck

Sothern and Marlowe were playing in a two weeks' engagement at the Garrick. After I had seen *Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, an idea occurred to me.

"Do you suppose it would be possible to get an interview with Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe?"

"Their time is valuable, and you are an utter stranger," was the reply. After much hesitation, however, I decided to make the request. As I began writing, I received this advice:

"Be sure to state that you have tickets for all the plays. That's about the strongest evidence you can offer in your behalf."

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"Maybe you'd like to go along."

"Better not ask too much." But a light shone in her eyes.

And so the letter was written. In due time came the reply:

"I shall be very glad to see you both after the play any evening. After the matinees I have to rush to get dinner. Please ask for my manager in front of the theater."

We chose the last night of the engagement. As the audience filed out after the performance, we approached the box-office and inquired for Mr. Sothern's manager. "I will call him," the gentleman inside said. In a few moments a businesslike little man came out.

"Mr. Sothern asks that you will make yourselves comfortable inside the theater while he dresses. He asks for five minutes, but I'll give him fifteen," he said. It occurred to me to wonder what was the real length of an actor's five minutes, and I looked at my watch: in just twenty-nine minutes Mr. Sothern was with us.

The interval we spent doing three things: counting the lights in the theater kept burning for our benefit over the protest of the giant mahogany janitor; watching the rock-bound cliffs of gray Elsinore and the leafy forest of Arden descend from aloft behind the curtain and disappear in long rolls ready for their journey to St. Louis; and picturing to ourselves our coming reception. "It will be stiff and

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formal," we thought. "It will last for five or ten minutes but will seem an hour; our evident embarrassment in the presence of the great actor will bore him, and even we shall be relieved when the interview is over. But the fact that we have been received by Mr. Sothern will be something to remember."

Our meditations were interrupted by a pleasant "Good evening, I am very glad to see you. You will of course take dinner with me."

"Oh no," I protested in confusion, "we should not think of so imposing upon your time and generosity."

"Oh, but we shall really save time thus, and I shall be very glad to have you. We can talk as we drive out and while we eat. Just step down this way. The passage is not too well lighted, but we shall find our way."

As we went down the stairs and through a dingy underground passage to the street, Mr. Sothern continued, "You chose the last night for your interview, and I am glad you did so. The mental and physical strain always incident to an engagement of the kind we have just completed is now over, and I can talk with a free mind."

We ascended a stairway to the street, entered the waiting automobile and were whirled away.

"Well, we would perhaps better get to the questions which you stated in your letter you wished to discuss. They are too big to settle finally, but I can

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give you briefly my idea of their significance. Your first question, I believe, concerns Hamlet."

"Yes; was his madness real, or pretended?"

"On that point, at least, I fail to see how there can be room for difference of opinion. There is no question in my mind that Hamlet is only pretending madness, the better to carry out his plans for revenge. That is made plain by his swearing his friends to secrecy concerning all they have seen, if in the future Hamlet shall see fit 'to put an antic disposition on.' Moreover, the entire play loses its significance if we attribute real insanity to Hamlet."

"But," I ventured to ask, "how do you interpret Hamlet's words and actions between the final exit of the Ghost and the entry of his friends? He says here

'My tables—meet it is I set it down!
That one may smile and smile and be a villain!'

and here he takes his tablet and writes."

"Well, it is just a little difficult to answer that question with entire satisfaction; but I accept the act of writing as merely symbolical. Hamlet's 'tables' are the tables of his memory. It seems to me that it would be entirely natural for Hamlet, here under an intense emotional strain after the revelation of the Ghost, to say and do some unusual things. But this act of writing is likely to prove confusing. I used to carry it out in playing *Hamlet*, but in recent years I have not done so. On such a point as this, the critics may quibble, but the actor must be def-

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inite. He must never leave his audience in doubt as to his interpretation of any part of the play, and it is for the sake of perfect clearness that I have discontinued the use of tablet and pencil."

I had been so engrossed in what Mr. Sothern was saying as only now to observe that we were getting out of the down-town district. As I was wondering what hotel we were being taken to, our host continued some remark he had made to my companion with the statement:

"Mrs. Sothern went home immediately after she had finished her part as Ophelia, to retire and rest for her trip to St. Louis in the morning. We have adopted the practice of taking a house while here and find it much more satisfactory than our former custom of staying at hotels. It is more quiet and homelike, and we find that this means a great deal to us in our work."

With this speech my thoughts flew into fairyland. At the time of my request for the interview and indeed up to the time of the invitation to dinner, our fondest dreams had not carried us beyond an interview at the theater; and even then the thought of entertainment in the home of Mr. Sothern had never crossed our minds. Yet, somehow, in spite of the unexpected and unusual turn of our fortune, the unassuming friendliness of our host had so far reassured us that we looked forward to this new experience with unmixed delight. After this we were prepared for anything. So, when we reached

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our destination and were told that the car would take us home after dinner, our request that Mr. Sothern dismiss his chauffeur and permit us to take the "L" home was as feeble as it was unavailing.

As Mr. Sothern led the way into the house, he said, "We consider ourselves very fortunate in being able to secure this place." And we agreed with him that it was a most desirable home. After seating us in the softly-lighted sitting-room, our host excused himself and went upstairs. For several moments we heard him in low conversation, and then he returned.

"When Mrs. Sothern learned that you were here, she insisted on coming down; but with Rosalind this afternoon and Ophelia this evening she has had a trying day, and I thought she ought to have unbroken rest for her trip tomorrow."

So we were not to see Miss Marlowe. The singular pronoun in Mr. Sothern's letter had prepared us for this disappointment, and lessened its sharpness. Moreover, the hungry man who has unexpectedly received half a loaf is too busy enjoying the half he has to regret very deeply the half he has not.

Our meditations on the narrow margin by which we had failed to see the famous actress were interrupted by the announcement of dinner. The meal was simple, but excellently prepared—apparently Mr. Sothern's usual after theater dinner. At the beginning there was wine, which in accordance with a certain clause in an insurance policy we declined.

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Our host smiled as he pledged our health, saying, "If you played Hamlet you would afterwards enjoy a glass of wine."

Shylock was served with the soup. My question as to Shakespeare's attitude toward the Jew brought this statement from Mr. Sothern:

"I interpret Shylock as essentially an evil character placed in an environment forcing him to develop in accordance with his natural inclinations."

"What do you think of Shylock's reference to the ring which had been given him by Leah before their marriage? When he exclaims,

'I would not have given it for a wilderness of
monkeys,'

was he thinking of the money value of the ring?"

"Ah, that is just the point. Shakespeare was enough a student of human nature to realize that there is no man so bad as not to have some redeeming trait; and in this allusion to Shylock's affection for his dead wife, Shakespeare has given the single touch that saves his hero from utter villainy."

In the course of our further talk, Mr. Sothern made it clear that he has rather small respect for the idea that success is the result of genius. "The true name of 'genius' is hard work. Many a time in the preparation of a play we have spent the greater part of a day on a single rehearsal; and then when we have drilled and drilled until each one actually lives the part he represents, if some actor acquits himself unusually well, it is easy for the audience to attribute his success to genius."

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"Yet you would not say, I suppose, that industry is sufficient in itself to assure success?"

"Of course not, but if one has reasonable talent, his achievement is in direct proportion to his effort."

With the eggs—hard boiled, cut in half and served in a white gravy sort of something—came a secret. I had shortly before made some reference to the effectiveness of the ghost scenes in *Hamlet* and in *Macbeth*. "Our treatment of the ghosts is an illustration of the point I have just been making," said Mr. Sothern. "Did you see the Ghost of Banquo make his first entry?"

"I did not, in spite of the fact that I was watching eagerly for his appearance."

"It is very simple, but it took years to perfect it. A preparation of such a character as not to be affected by the ordinary lights on the stage is applied to the face of the ghost. As the servants bring in the banquet, he accompanies them unobserved and takes his place. At the proper time, a special light is thrown upon his face and he becomes the Ghost of Banquo. And so with the Ghost of Hamlet's father." There seemed to be in Mr. Sothern's concluding statement on this point, a touch of honest pride: "This thing I brought to final success without the help of my wife. I perfected it one day during her absence from the theater, and in our evening rehearsal surprised her with it."

It was now past two o'clock, and we felt that any

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further intrusion on the hospitality of our host would be an imposition. As we arose to go, Mr. Sothern gave me a small volume. "You have been interested in Hamlet," he said. "This little book expresses, I believe in every detail, my own conception of his character. I should be glad to have you read it and let me know your opinion of it. Send the book to me at the Shubert Theater, St. Louis, next week. It was a present from the author."

This was an unexpected act of courtesy. I have thought since then that Mr. Sothern realized the inexperience of his guests, which I believe we made no attempt to conceal, and exerted himself to add to their enjoyment. He had reason, indeed, to be in a most happy frame of mind. He had just closed a two weeks' engagement, playing to crowded houses and most appreciative audiences. The closing plays, *As You Like It* in the afternoon, and *Hamlet* in the evening, had been the best, and the most favorably received. But without inquiring too closely into motives, it is not too much to say that he provided for two strangers, totally without claim upon his hospitality, an entertainment which must remain one of their fondest remembrances, and for which a feeling deeper than mere thankfulness must ever associate itself with the name of the great Shakespearean actor.

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# Mates

By Walter L. Myers

Big Hal Thompson, just outside the door of his adobe cabin, swept a slow frowning look down over the squalid Arizona wood camp. Sunset was near; but the mellowed light could not lessen the ugliness of that parched hillside with the bristling juniper stumps, the weathered frame office shack, the dirty tents, the crazy mud-plastered stables by the railroad track.

"It ain't like Ioway, Ann," said Hal, conviction and worry in his voice, "but there's chances out here. You know they're just buildin' railroads all the time. Soon's I hear of one, I'll quit this wood haulin' and get some station work. It won't take no time to get ahead then." Hal took out his pipe, fumbling it abstractedly with work-stiffened fingers.

His wife left her cooking and came to the door. Like her husband, she was strong and wholesome, made for honest, hard work. Her face was comely, patient, showing in the softened light a fresh, dusky bloom.

"I know," she said, her eyes on the camp. Then a little sigh hurried her words. "I wish we'd find some station work right away. Somehow you ain't makin' any more here than you did in Centerville with the dray wagon, even if you are gettin' big wages."

There was no trace of complaint in Ann's voice;

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yet her words deepened with Hal the mood that was becoming more and more fixed upon him as the days passed, a feeling of unrest and perplexity, a feeling that something was very much wrong with his world. He spoke defensively, addressing his pipe:

"Station work, you know, is the best way there is to get ahead. You don't have to run all over the country like you do haulin' wood. You have just one hundred feet of track to grade and you're your own boss. Then, soon's you get money enough, you buy mules and hire men, and before long if you manage right you can be a contractor. Station work is the thing to get."

Somehow Hal found no reassurance in the words. Big kindly mouth pressed tight and gray eyes contracted, he began to fill his pipe.

"It'll be nice," said Ann quietly. "And then let's get an irrigated farm. I just know they pay best. You remember Fred Paulson made lots of money on an irrigated farm when he came out west."

Hal lit his pipe, puffing at it heavily.

Ann spoke again in a soft, far-away voice, "My, didn't them houses on the irrigated farms look nice when we come down through Colorado on the train?"

Hal turned. Suddenly then the perfectness of her in the first glow of sunset, the warmth of her cheek, the womanly fullness of figure, the enduring kindliness of her even profile,—her utter suitableness to him, swelled in his heart with a breath-taking rush.

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Completely it had its way with him; and yet it brought no words; he could not speak what mastered him; he could not even shape it to coherent thought.

For an instant only was Hal possessed with a lifting, wordless joy. This swift gladness had never come to him in the first few months of his life with Ann. It was quite unlike anything in the matter-of-fact courtship preceding a marriage said by all the "folks" of Centerville to be one in which "both done real well." And now as always this deep happiness lasted but a moment; then again came the depression. Like the happiness, it too was recent, this dull, heavy sense that somehow the plan of life was botched, that through and through the world was wrong. And strangely enough his very joy in Ann was part of the trouble. Hal turned from her to the arid land. A little tightening of resistance came at sight of it.

Empty and silent it lay about the hillside of the camp, a gray plain vaguely rolling, touched here and there with dark juniper growth, edged with a remote circle of dark hills which rose in the west to one low double peak. It was all a great strangeness, distressing and compelling. Side by side now as often before, the man and the woman faced it. They frowned; their attitudes stiffened. Quite unconsciously but with effort, they were trying to understand it all, trying to translate this land into terms of the earth as they had known it from infancy, well-ordered, yielding homes and happiness, greenness and the smoke of farm chimneys.

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"This ain't a very nice place," said Ann. She drew herself slightly from contact with the hard mud walls of the cabin.

"It ain't as nice as Ioway." Hal bit hard on his pipe.

The tension increased. It was Hal, looking back and up into the sky, who spoke first. "There's them hawks, Ann." He pointed.

Ann turned to look. "Somebody said yesterday they had a nest over yonder in the big rock. Ain't it funny they always fly round with each other?"

Close together without beat of wing, two great birds sailed straight into the west where the sun was touching the higher of the double peaks, came about, tilting smoothly, and wheeled back again in a wide slow curve against the reddening sky.

Often Ann and Hal had watched the birds, attracted at first by the fact that they were the only living things to be seen. Then that flying pair had come to have for the man and wife a significance comforting though not understood: those mates of the sky, fierce and confident above the silent, spacious miles of wood and hill and plain, were masters of this strange land and were glad in it. Watching them now, Hal took heart.

Again the hawks soared in the same great circle. Then their wings began to beat, and they slanted hurrying back across the horizon.

"I wonder how them things find stuff to eat," said Hal, his face still uplifted.

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"I don't see how they can find their nests when they go so far," said Ann.

When the spell of the flight had gone, Ann turned back to the preparation of supper. Hal began to find some pleasure in his pipe.

Down by the stables a man started up the path toward the cabin. He was dressed like other men of the camp, but he did not lumber in his gait like a heavy-muscled laborer, or slouch at waist and shoulder like a much-sitting teamster. He was tall and he carried his height well. Hal, seeing him, began to frown; but the man, when near enough, spoke familiarly, asking how Hal had finished his work so quickly, complaining about the heat,—all in a voice deep but not harsh, accurate in grammar, conceding to the vernacular only in slurred consonants and one oath mouthed cautiously with a glance at the door.

"You started work last, Mark, so they give you the worst of the two teams," explained Hal, making no boast of the energy that had gone into the day's work. "After you've been here a while you can make 'em give you a better team."

"Right you are. I'm the one that'll have a good team,—if I keep this job long enough."

Hal turned quickly, compelled by something in Mark's voice; but Mark's face was without expression except that the eyelids drooped ever so slightly and one mouth-corner was drawn in. Hal looked away feeling a little ashamed, a little angry, a little puzzled. So it was whenever he talked with Mark

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during the month that the man had been in camp. This type, a drifter, assured, able, yet purposeless, had never before entered Hal's world.

The new teamster moved to the door and leaned easily against it, one elbow set high on the frame, the back of the hand on the cheek. His voice took on a new tone:

"And Mrs. Hal, how are you? Cooking to beat anything and putting up the best grub in camp."

Ann looked up from the stove, her serious face flushing. "I could do lots better if I had some good hickory wood."

"That's what makes it so downright remarkable, Mrs. Hal. Here you are in this God-forsaken place, nothing to do with, and makin' everything round you so homelike and pretty. You make a man just crazy for a home."

Smiling, Ann stooped over the cooking. "You ought to get married then."

"Oh, there's no use bringin' any woman I know to this camp as long as you're here. I don't know one that wouldn't look like a poor, faded imitation beside you in that blue dress, Mrs. Hal." A laugh coated the bald flattery, and Mark looked about to include Hal. "There isn't another in the state, is there, Hal?"

Hal had been listening with growing resentment. Now he looked gravely from his wife's face to Mark's and back again. Ann stood flushing, laughing, depreciating herself, hands fluttering about the

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cookery. The man's smile was crooked and mirthless,—and yet it was a smile and directed at Hal.

"No," said Hal briefly. He felt lost and outmatched; and in the whole unpleasantness there was a little burning core that hurt.

Then Ann invited Mark to supper and Hal forced himself to second her. Mark refused, but the refusal was somehow in itself a compliment which made Ann laugh and grow pretty again, and which put a new sting into that little burning spot. Pained and mystifyingly disturbed, Hal watched Mark pass out of sight, tall, easy, unhurried. Of late Mark had been coming very often to the cabin. But no other visit had been quite so bad as this.

"Ain't he funny?" said Ann.

"Yes."

"He's so much different from the other men of the camp."

Then supper was eaten in silence, while the red from the west poured in through the cabin door.

When Ann commenced to clear away the dishes, Hal spoke, staring at his plate. In time of need words were never easy for Hal; all through the meal he had been searching for the best ones. Now they came awkwardly:

"Ann, what Mark said about that blue dress was right. It looks real nice, Ann."

Ann went on about her work. "I know you always liked it, Hal."

Because Hal did not look up, he missed the smile

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that went with Ann's words. The sound of Mark's compliments was loud in his ears and the sound of Ann's laughing responses. He went on doggedly:

"I'll wipe the dishes for you, Ann."

Ann never paused in her brisk work about the table. "Land, no! You've done one day's work, Hal. Go on out in the cool and smoke. Here's your pipe." She slipped the pipe into Hal's big limp fingers and laid her hand on his shoulder. "My, but this shirt's awful dirty! Don't forget and put it on in the morning. Leave it for the wash."

Hal took one look at his wife with her face and hair ruddied by the western light, and then stepped out into a glow that could almost be felt,—that, in the scheme of things as he knew it, had no right to exist. The kindness of Ann's voice and touch was in a way as foreign as the gold and crimson desolation of the earth.

Hal's sleep did not rest him that night.

The next day he was to make a long drive for some camp necessaries that had been set off by mistake at a distant railway station. The familiar bustle of preparation in the clearness of the early morning brightened things a little. Hal even whistled above the dry rattle of his wood wagon. At the first turn he waved Ann good-bye. She was watching him from their cabin door.

But mile jolted after mile; the sun burned; and the dust volumed up from the plodding hoofs or streamed away in the heat-whirls. Hour by hour

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Hal squinted at the gray quiver of the horizon, drinking now and then from the tepid water in his canteen; and hour by hour the old depression settled down, and with it came a sort of hostile tension against everything. All this was the more tormenting because Hal could not think in words, could not analyze and appraise the besetting forces; but like a man threatened in the dark could only endure the challenge of this strange land, which impassive and aloof as its monstrous horizon, yet malignant as its rushing dust-devils, thrust upon him the puzzles of life. So he rode all day; out with the empty wagon, back with the supplies, all day alone.

Hal met no one on the road back to camp. He found no one in the camp itself; it chanced that even the manager was not in the office cabin where Hal unloaded the wagon. When he paused from his work the silence was complete. Up the hill there was no sign of Ann. Hal drove to the stable, unharnessed, and hurried through the feeding.

He had just finished it and was standing in the low stable door, when two wood-choppers came round the corner. They stopped and looked at Hal as at a stranger. There was a little expectant silence broken at length by one of the choppers:

"Ain't you seen nobody from camp today?"

"No. Why?"

The chopper's eyes dropped. "Thought maybe you had."

Hal spoke impatiently. "What's the matter? What makes you act so queer?"

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"Nothin'." The chopper shifted heavily from one foot to the other.

"Well, I'm goin' up home." Frowning, Hal brushed past them.

Silently and as if drilled to it, the choppers fell in behind him.

Then round the fence of the stable corral slouched a man with a rifle over his shoulder. From his hand swung a great, limp, hook-beaked bird.

Hal stopped short. "Where'd you get that hawk?"

"Shot him. I seen him light, so I went for my gun and crawled up on him when he was settin' still and got him." The man spat between yellow teeth and smeared the stubble of his chin with the back of the hand that held the bird.

"It ain't one of them that's always flyin' around, is it?" The angry disbelief in Hal's voice demanded a negative answer.

"Yes. I been layin' for 'em. I'll get the other too." The man held up the gray air-sailor with the feathers clotted on its breast and gloated over it.

"Somebody ought to shot you first," said Hal tensely. "Too bad you wasn't drunk like you are most of the time; then you'd 'a missed him."

The retort came quick and crude: "Say, you ain't got much call to worry about hawks. Don't you know your wife's went off with Mark?"

The thing that was to come had come. The world changed. There were about Hal men and things that

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he had seen before, but they had no reason and no meaning; Ann was gone; racked as he might be with inward protest, he knew that Ann was gone. There were voices and confused doings; and immediately after, Hal knew that he stood alone in his cabin and that it was empty, empty in its two rooms. In each he looked about him long and carefully, as though the bare interior held many resources of concealment. Sometimes he was outside the cabin, for the buildings of the camp were there and the wide blanks of earth and sky. Men were about watching him intently; voices spoke; he answered. Someone was telling how, from the edge of the juniper, he had seen Ann and Mark go. They had left hurriedly and openly toward the east; only Mark's wagon and team had come back, plodding, sweat-covered, without a driver.

One voice said, "I kind of think they'll come back, Hal."

Hal's voice, very slow: "I ain't countin' on it none." Or perhaps he had thought it out loud, for Ann had surely left him. He felt her in his mind, smiling, flushed, and pretty at Mark's compliments. She had gone looking like that. He could not doubt that she had gone; he could not doubt that she would stay.

Then the world was on fire again with the sunset; and at his doorway Hal was standing alone in the unreal light, struggling with an impossible reality. Ann had gone with Mark—gone—gone. But he

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could not comprehend this thing; days and weeks and months with Ann had colored with her every atom of his spirit and left him no way of knowing what life would be without her. And yet a tremendous, torturing power was forcing him to comprehend in an instant.

Finally he was staring at blackness and knew it was night. He turned into the cabin. Then suddenly some mental escapement clicked, and a thought worded itself with terrible clearness: Ann and Mark would spend that night somewhere together. This was a thing that could not be endured; it must not be upon the earth. A trembling frenzy of haste seized and hurried him from the cabin. Down the hill he stumbled. Because the powers that drove him set his feet in that way and no other, he followed the eastward road along the railway, now running until the cool air swelled and burned in his laboring chest and the big stars wavered in circles, slowing then to a half-walking run until the picture flamed to hurl him on. The road faded to a trail; the trail disappeared under his feet; but Hal plunged on by the railway, lurching through draws and arroyos, possessed with a certainty that what he sought lay just ahead.

It was hours later that Hal dragged himself into his cabin and dropped face downward upon the empty bed, inert with defeat and exhaustion. Somewhere out there among the dim hills reason had come back to him: Ann and Mark could not possibly have

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gone that way; he had wasted time; he should have taken a horse; he would go back for one. And as he was turning, suddenly he knew that he could not find his wife that night. He carried that knowledge back to the cabin.

He must have slept a little on the bed, for soon it was daylight and there was sound of voices in the camp. Hal jumped up. He would get a horse. He hurried down to the stables. The teams, his as well as Mark's, were being harnessed to the wagons by two choppers and the camp manager. Hal could see the manager jerking at the buckles and could hear him cursing. When Hal was close the man turned a red, angry face and spoke:

"Oh, here you are! If you're goin' to do freightin' in this camp you got to tend to work. It don't make no difference what happens."

Hal scarcely heard. He clutched a handful of harness as if he would pull the animal to him. "I got to have one of these horses," he said laboriously.

The manager shouted his answer so that the horses started and the section gang on the railway paused in mounting their hand-car. Neither of the teams had moved one stick of wood yesterday. Did Hal think that he was hired to do nothing but chase around after women? There were plenty of cheap women in town just as good.

The violence of it all beat up a quick anger in Hal. He started toward the man. But the last words of the manager took the anger from him and brought him to a stop.

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"Any fool'd know they've took a train somewhere along the line and gone on the railroad."

Other things were said and done after this, but Hal knew little of them. He went back to the cabin. He even ate some food. He sat long on the bench by the door, staring down at the railway, half fearful, half wondering at those shining strips of steel that had become as wicked living things. Sometimes a choking ache surged up in him and the rails were in a way the cause. Yet they drew him and drew him, until at last he went down and walked between them, face bent to the reflected heat and glare of the roadbed.

Opposite the wheelless box cars that housed the Mexicans who worked on that section, Hal met their boss, the man who had first told him that Ann was gone. He still carried the rifle. With a glance Hal had passed, when he heard the mechanism of the gun click. He turned. The boss was aiming at something in the sky.

Hal looked, and saw far up in the blue a wide-spread, slow-wheeling bird; but in the daze of his trouble he could not realize what was taking place. Then the rifle cracked. The bird swayed, righted, and went on evenly, only mounting higher in its steady curve. The boss muttered, gave Hal a side-long glance, and clicked another cartridge into position. Again he fired; again the bird swayed, righted, and kept on its purposeful way.

"It must be lookin' for its mate," said Hal, face upward, haggard eyes straining.

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The boss fumbled sullenly with the rifle breach. "I'll git it," he growled.

"Why can't you leave it be?" Hal's eyes followed the high unswerving bird; his voice was thick in the straining muscles of his brown neck.

The section boss jerked upright with a snarl. "Aw, hell! What you got to do with this?"

Hal said nothing; his eyes were still with the hawk. In his mind were vague tormenting glimpses of Ann as she looked when they last watched the birds against the evening sky.

"You don't seem to be doin' nothin' to find your wife," the section boss went on. "If I was you I'd know where to look." There was no more friendship in the man's voice than there had been on the day before when he told Hal of Ann's going. "Them two must have went to the Mexican choppers' camp down on the cutting. That's the best place for 'em to get the train. We was flaggin' down everything there yesterday while we was puttin' in new rail. Them two could stay with the choppers till a passenger was about due, and then go down and get on it. The Cholos would keep 'em hid for a little cash."

Hal made no sign. He had heard, but he seemed to have lost the power of comprehension.

The boss continued. If he convinced Hal, there might be some unusual excitement about camp. "Them two didn't get on no train yesterday, because I was right there all the time. But we're goin' down

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there soon's my gang comes back from up yonder and then we'll flag everything again. If I was you, I'd go down there. I'd go down and git my woman—" The boss sneered and threw the gun to his shoulder, eyes fixed on the hawk, "if I wanted her after she'd been away as long as this."

A sudden understanding went through Hal with a rush of fire. He leaped forward, tore the rifle from the man's hands, whirled it over his head, dashed it on the rails, struck again and again until the gun was mere bent steel and splintered wood. "You—leave—that hawk alone," choked Hal.

Then he threw the rifle at the feet of the cowering boss and set out with long, uneven strides. He was going to the Mexican camp.

All the way down the road, the burning heat of the sun and the burning heat of Hal's body centered for him in a torturing, mirage-like picture of the filthy camp that held his wife and Mark. Seemingly just at arm's length, almost in the dust kicked up by his stumbling feet quivered that picture, until he could have hurled himself into it headlong.

At last Hal saw the camp itself on its rocky hillside, the tent-shaped huts scattered among a few old junipers. When he could see the thatchings of shaggy juniper bark, he began to run. He was near the finish, and he panted like a distance man at the tape. Intense, unswerving, he left the road and plunged up toward the miserable huts.

A small brown woman who crouched in one low

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opening, straightened and watched him with wide eyes. Hal put her aside and thrust head and shoulders into the hut. The woman protested in shrill jargon. With fierce intentness Hal made for the next hut. Another woman appeared, and the two filled the air with clamor. Hal plunged into another hovel. Then brown-faced, big-hatted men came running with axes. They shouted in falsetto with flashing of white teeth; they crowded upon Hal; they interfered with one another.

Without a word Hal pushed them apart and made his round of the shelters. A rifle and some six-shooters appeared among the axes. But the squalling camp held back from that terrible, silent concentration. Not a hut did Hal miss. At last only one was left, standing a little apart. Hal made for it. A big Mexican with an ax guarded it. As Hal came up he caught within the hut a glimpse of blue cloth and leaped toward it in an all-consuming blaze of madness for which slow hours of suffering had heaped the fuel. He came on with a long shout, arms extended, fingers groping. The Mexican flinched and Hal swept him away with the whole front of the flimsy shelter. And then— Hal was halted as if by a solid obstruction; there was in that hut only a small Mexican woman huddled in a blanket, a stranger the eyes of whose thin brown face were big with fear. Hal could not take another step; but so filled was he with the very breath of terrible things, that as he looked into those frightened eyes, it was as if he had seen himself kill this woman.

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It was done in an instant: the fury was vented, the madness was gone, and Hal found himself stumbling among the rocks of the hillside and heard vaguely behind him a great shouting. "Loco! Loco!" a woman's voice kept screaming above the chatter. "Loco! Loco!" he heard even after he had topped the hill and started on the descent.

Anger was gone, purpose was gone. There was with him only a sort of black horror in which raged a man who trampled on a woman and killed her terribly. Again and again he sickened with the cold sickness of mutilations and an utter revulsion at death with violence. He walked with bent head. If he looked up, the dwarfish contortions of the juniper trees, silent in the glare from steely sky and baking gravel, put upon him new abhorrence of that man who would have killed and who was he himself. So he plodded on with sagging head.

At last Hal saw that his feet had found a clearly-marked road. The sight and feel of it made the world a little more normal to him; he grew suddenly tired and threw himself upon a rugged outcrop. He was on the edge of the juniper now, and before him lay the open prairie. The horror no longer enveloped him like a physical presence; but it crowded his mind, a terrible reality, though far away now, back among the huts of the Mexican choppers.

Somewhere down the road Hal began to hear a confused, low-pitched babble. Louder it grew, until he could distinguish an overtone of flat querulous

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bleats that told of a band of sheep. He sat up mechanically and watched for them. Soon they were streaming round him in the dust, pausing each for an instant to eye him, going on with little runs, stopping to nose the bare earth, always bleating. Hal found some relief in the commonplace confusion.

The flock thinned, and with the stragglers appeared the Mexican herder and his two dogs. He came straight to Hal, leaving the sheep to the dogs.

"You know Meester Hal-Thompson at the camp, *si*? I go find heem maybe." Consonants hissed and popped in the man's haste.

"I'm him," said Hal dully.

"*Si. 'St' bueno. Muncho gracias.* My boss he say tell heem. That *hombre* breeng hees wife our *rancho*. You *sabe*. That *hombre* and hees wife. At *rancho* my boss, Meester Taylor. *'St' bueno? Adios.* Them sheep—" With a shrug of narrow shoulders the man hurried away.

Hal heard and understood. All doubt was gone; Ann and Mark were at Taylor's sheep ranch. He throbbed at the stab of the bare truth. Yet now access of pain could not drive him to violence. He looked down the road. He could walk to Taylor's in half a day. He saw himself travel those miles and find Ann and Mark. What then? The horror at the Mexican camp suddenly sprang upon Taylor's sheep ranch. Hal sank down on the rock with his face in his hands, trying to shut out the terror-stricken eyes of the woman at the feet of the raging man.

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Again Hal looked down the road toward Taylor's. He would go and beg Ann to come back to him. But Mark would be there and— Hal turned his head from the blackness of the depths that opened before him. He sat a long time.

It was a faint thrill of recognition that brought conscious sight back to Hal. He was watching a hawk that sailed in the hot blue sky. Steadily it circled and very slowly, with motionless wings, as if set in a chosen path that led round the horizon from north to west, from west to south, from south to east, from east again to north. And in the north the bird whirled with a short spiral to a higher plane. Then once more, west, south, east, and north, it swept the circle of the sky, using no strength in beating of wings, never changing by a handbreadth the line of its flight. Again and again the hawk mounted and wheeled, mounted and wheeled from north to north until it was high and small against the blue. There as though the last air-path had been traveled, it hesitated, dipping, swerving, wavering, while Hal shared the labor of that uncertainty. But suddenly the end came. At something far distant, something beyond the horizon, the bird launched itself; went swift and straight; grew smaller, smaller,—vanished.

Hal strained his eyes after it across the vacant land swimming now in a thin gray haze of silence. Dimly, but somehow part of his distress, a question had been left to him: what had sent that hawk so

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surely beyond that strip of bluish gray where sky met plain? Baffled as one shut out in time of need from the confidences of a friend, Hal searched the horizon. Gradually he saw that grayish strip to be mountains immeasurably far off, never before revealed to him. At length, slowly as if his eyes were gaining fresh power, some change of light began to open new spaces; to push back the sky-line of vast uplands and sweeping slopes; to call from shrouding distance flat-topped mesa and rounded foothills; to sharpen blurred ranges into fine reality of canyon and peak and ridge, ash-colored and ghostly in the clear light; to lead on and on till Hal's eyes could no longer follow into a land beyond the farthest ranges, pale and empty and hushed as with the wonder of its own immensity. Deep into it Hal looked; and while he looked, the vastness of life, the very bigness of the universe came upon him, pressed out the last spark of anger, took the sting from his grief,—and turned the grief and the anger to one crushing loneliness, a thing for no man to resist.

The light changed, and the horizon was only a strip of bluish gray. A sudden longing for Ann whirled Hal about and drew his eyes toward Taylor's; but now he could not even picture himself traveling the road that led to Mark and Ann. If not that, what then? Suddenly, with the formless, unquestioning certainty of instinct, he knew that he must go the way the hawk had gone; that Ann, flushed and pretty in the nearness of Mark, had

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barred him from her life; that only very far away in the strange limitless spaces he had seen across the horizon, beyond the farthest ranges could a man endure what he must endure. Very slowly at first, as if yielding to the actual pull of the distance, Hal started, weighed at every step with the burden of his loneliness.

At his cabin Hal stopped to make some preparations. Haphazardly he began to gather a little bundle. He hurried because everything in the cabin spoke of Ann. An apron—Ann quick and efficient about the little stove. A sunbonnet—Ann's face in it looking out at him with kind brown eyes. Hal threw up a hand to cut off the picture. Or it was a big garnet breastpin that Ann's mother had left her, and with the pin a rushing crowd of pictures, green Iowa hills, quiet village streets, Ann and he under the maples. He pressed the pin to his lips. "Ann!" he sobbed. He dropped the pin into his pocket and stared through the door at the segment of dim horizon that he was to cross.

And then near by, out of Hal's sight, a sound of wheels and horses' hoofs, a sound that might have been going on a long time before it suddenly became real to Hal and as suddenly stopped. A man spoke:

"Well, here you are, Mrs. Thompson. I'm sorry I couldn't get you home sooner."

Hal was looking out of the door. He was looking at Ann and Taylor getting out of a buckboard. He was seeing, but—

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Ann was calling to him, "Why, Hal, what you doin'—oh, Hal!"

They were in the cabin, Ann, Taylor, and Hal. Taylor was talking, but Hal heard only in snatches: "can't ever thank you enough . . . We'll get along all right now. . . . If ever I can do anything for you. . . ."

Taylor was gone. Ann was talking rapidly, earnestly.

"Hal, Hal, didn't Mark come and tell you where I was. Oh, the sneak! I knew it, I knew he'd run away! Didn't he leave any word at all?"

"No."

A flood of warm light went sweeping through Hal. Ann had come back to him! But darkness was still near.

"Oh, Hal, I know why. Mark's bad and he must be a coward too. He was afraid of you. Hal, on the way to Taylor's he tried to get me to run off with him. He tried to kiss me." Ann's cheek flamed and her eyes were dark and steady on Hal's. "I went so quick I didn't have time to write any note, and Mark said he'd come right back and tell you. You see it was Mrs. Taylor's baby before they expected, and they couldn't get any doctor, and the Mexican women ain't any good. And that Mark—I told him you'd fix him for actin' that way. Oh, I was afraid he wouldn't tell you, and I made Mr. Taylor send a herder to see you and I hurried and hurried—oh, Hal, you must've worried awful."

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Hal was holding Ann close, his cheek against her smooth hair. He raised his head and looked again at that segment of horizon.

"I did," said Hal with simple emphasis. His arm tightened. The lines of pain faded on his face; clear-eyed he gazed at the blurred line where plain joined sky. It was morning-time with Hal, and he was shaking off the tatters of confused and ugly dreams.

Ann spoke from his shoulder: "And, Hal, Mr. Taylor says when he was in Flagstaff last week he heard of a new railroad where they're just more than lookin' for men to do station work."

"We'll go see about it," said Hal.

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# The Midland Library

The Columbia University Press has recently published a volume of *Studies in Southern History and Politics,* edited by James W. Garner of the University of Illinois. It consists of a collection of fifteen articles by various writers, on topics indicated by the title.

The Open Court Publishing Company announces for spring publication a new book by Paul Carus, on the timely subject of *Nietzsche and Other Exponents of Individualism.* Another important volume from this company is Bertrand Russell's *Scientific Method in Philosophy,* a critique of Bergson's theories.

Eliot Jones of the State University of Iowa is the author of a book recently published by the Harvard University Press, entitled *The Anthracite Coal Combination in the United States.* It is a detailed study of the anthracite industry in this country, including the effect of railroad control upon prices, the legal problems raised by government suits, and public ownership of natural resources.

An event of interest in the Middle West is the publication by the Torch Press of a volume of poems from the pen of Selden L. Whitcomb. These poems form a sequence under the title *Via Crucis.* They are of a deep and genuine religious nature, and are characterized by their simplicity of expression and singleness of motive. A prose introduction and conclusion, under the titles *Eastward* and *Westward,* are attractive features of the book.

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# The Midland Chronicle

Two groups of lyrics, by Fannie Stearns Davis and Arthur Davison Ficke, are notable contributions to the March number of *Poetry*. Moireen Fox's *Liadain to Curithir* rises superior to much of the *vers libre* now being published.

An interesting little periodical called *The Teepee Book* has begun publication in Sheridan, Wyoming. The first two numbers are chiefly devoted to Indian lore, but other subjects of interest to the "land of the high plains" are promised later on. The publisher is Mr. Herbert Coffeen.

The March issue of the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* contains several articles of considerable interest. A scholarly review of Schouler's *History of the United States* is contributed by Orin G. Libby. Middle Western readers will be especially interested in an article by William R. Manning on *Diplomacy Concerning the Santa Fe Trail.* In *A Neglected Critic of Our Civil War* Louis M. Sears tells of M. Eugene Forcade, the brilliant political editor of *La revue des deux mondes* at the time of the war of the rebellion. The other articles in the number are *Methodist Church Influence in Southern Politics,* by William W. Sweet, and *The Methods and Operations of the Scioto Group of Speculators,* by Archer B. Hurlbert.

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# The Midland

A MAGAZINE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

VOLUME I MAY, 1915 NUMBER 5


## In Limine

By Mahlon Leonard Fisher

I fear the chance of Immortality:
For me, I would be dreamless: I would end
As utterly as atoms when they blend
With sunlight and are swept into the sea,
Becoming part of its immensity,
But serving no set purpose, save to poise
Midway between the stillness and the noise
Of upper ocean; and unnumbered be.
For I have counted on oblivion,
And on inertness, who have guessed one may
Remember back to sadness in a Day
Of much remembering! So would I shun
The Utmost Overthrow, if, by a breath,
However fleeting, it be less than *Death!*

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## "Forenoon, and Afternoon, and—Night"

By Florence Livingston Joy

A new biography is on the market. The writer, William Belmont Parker; the book, *Edward Rowland Sill, His Life and Work.* Merely to get up a biography, even though it be the first complete story of the shy American poet who was "contented to die unknown," wins for an author no especial distinction. But to unclasp for the people, as Mr. Parker does, a book of life that offers refreshing and cheering and inspiring disclosure of a brave and fine and gentle man—a man who loved truth, in the audience chamber of whose quiet heart the still small voice spoke clearly—to do all this without violating the sanctity of that reticent nature, *is* accomplishment distinctive.

"To keep a thought seven years"—the haunting phrase from Sill's *Field Notes* repeats and repeats itself as the reader feels the growing effects of Mr. Parker's manner of developing this "life:"

> "To keep a thought seven years, and then
> Welcome it coming to you
> On the way from another's brain and pen—"

for Parker tells in his preface that his book was ten years in the making. The volume follows a deviation from his original scheme of essay and criticism. Doubtless the criticism would have gone well enough, but very sure is one that the finally adopted plan of

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having the poet live again through his private letters, eventuates, through Mr. Parker's happy choice and arrangement of material, in a book of enlivening and reverential interest. Parker acknowledges that his "sailing orders" came from Sir Leslie Stephen and from Edward Rowland Sill himself: from Sir Leslie's opinion—"Nobody ever wrote a dull autobiography. . . . The biographer never can equal the autobiographer, but with a sufficient supply of letters, he may approach very closely to the same results;" from Sill's letter—"I do hate all I see about 'most anybody. Let a man write about himself. He's the only fellow who knows anything about it." So faithfully does the captain obey orders, that scarcely more than sixty of all the three hundred pages lie outside the poet's letters. The biographer's comments and reminiscent words from a few of Sill's life-long friends prevent monotony of epistolary matter. These illuminating comments, moreover, provoke into flashing colors the prism of personality lodged in the letters. There is no intrusion of anthology; there is no appraisal of poems; no excursion into criticism. A nice reserve keeps untouched things into which the public has no business to pry. Illustration of this withholding may be found in the matter of Sill's marriage, concerning which there is but one letter, an intimate sharing with a close friend of news of the poet's approaching wedding. Here is as much as the fondest reader friend has a right to know: "My Cousin Bess is to be

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the bride. It is a love match which has been about ten years getting up. I've loved her ever since she was a little chap and she me. We always tacitly considered the consanguinity as a barrier, till, lately, we have decided to smash it." Those whose feelings have ever shrunk from the smudged print of biographies that rudely unseal the "sacred silences" of the Dead, may with keen delight follow this wise revelation of a finely tempered soul.

Revelation—that is it. To one who but a few short years ago found only most meager items the utmost that libraries could give of information of Sill, this "life" is in truth a revelation. A scant magazine note might state that the poet passed his boyhood in a Connecticut village; but how, except through such a biography, could one whose child heart had always longed for a baby elephant "pet," happily discover that this same boy of a Connecticut village was own kin to the romping lass of an Iowa town? "As I go on in life," reveals the "Angel of the backward look," "I find that two or three of the child's spectacles still keep for me their freshness. One of these is the elephant leading the circus procession through the village street. I never could see it enough, that huge, unearthly shape, moving solemnly along; flapping its wings of ears not for common and mundane fly-guards, but in some mysterious gesture or ceremonial; bending its architectural legs in the wrong place; waving its trunk in incantation; seeing none of the trivial street matters to right or left, but ab-

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sorbed in Oriental dreams. I used to think it strange that people who were rich enough should not have one always pacing about their own backyards."

Or how could one know, without such a biography, that the dry-as-dust words of some "Who's Who" scribbler, "graduated from Yale in 1861," could screen a picturesque panorama only fragmentary bits of which may be staged here: "It was the custom of the professor of Greek to call upon members of the class to rise and read aloud passages of the text, giving beat, stress, and caesura. To this exercise, called scanning, Sill had a strong distaste, and among the reasons for his rustication was his response given with an air of extreme nonchalance, when called upon to scan, 'Please sir, I don't scan.'" "Not having grown up in a world where one amuses one's self; going to Puritan Yale where that world was unknown and abhorred, instead of to a Harvard where it was known and appreciated; realizing its Philistine side and having no opportunity to enjoy its aesthetic side, Sill hated it and every symbol of it. 'Society' he would have nothing of. When his beauty and eloquence made all the girls, after they heard him deliver the class poem, wild to have him introduced, he stubbornly refused, even his dearest who wanted to introduce him to their dearest. Yet we know that outside of 'social occasions,' no man was more attracted by women." "His figure was moderately tall and slight, but very graceful. But one day when I, who was taller and much heavi-

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er, put on the boxing gloves with him, I realized to my cost that strength was not an affair of muscle alone."

Again, accounts of the years spent in California had a bare, unsatisfactory yield until Mr. Parker's painstaking research made them bear fruit. There is the stout adventuring on a sailing voyage around Cape Horn; the still contemplation of color and sounds and silences, of society and constellations and life, of death and immortality and love, truth absorbed in the moving midnight hour of a moonlit summer sea; a tenderly reared, idealistic youth's revulsion at the sordidness of the new western country—"I swore an oath not to make this people my people, nor their God my God, for their God is money;" the gradual unfoldment of understanding and appreciation—"And as with the vegetation, so with the children born here. Little human blossoms such as one rarely sees in the cold Atlantic states." Comes the record, finally, of his heroic struggles for the university at Berkeley, from the faculty of which he resigned, after twelve years—"tired nearly to death, not so much with the work as with the unpromising conditions of it, and its environment." It is during these years, the biography makes clear, that the winning charms of California bring about Sill's capitulation. Her spirit becomes his spirit, now and again flowing in opalescent springs of song:

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"In this fair land whose fields lie robed in bloom,
A living poem bound in blue and gold;
With azure flowers like little specks of sky
Fallen, tangled in the dewdrops, to the grass,
And orange ones—as if the wealth below
Had blossomed up in beaten flakes of gold."

Sometimes the expression of his love for the big country is sobered by his contemplation of her noble redwood forests:

"Listen! A deep and solemn wind on high;
The shafts of shining dust shift to and fro;
The columned trees sway imperceptibly,
And creak as mighty masts when trade winds blow.
The cloudy sails are set; the earth-ship swings
Along the sea of space to grander things."

So, in countless ways, the maker of the new book unveils for us the man who, when admirers wished much to know him, insistently begged Thomas Bailey Aldrich, then editor of *The Atlantic,* to let him wear a "permanent mask" before the public: "More and more I wish all literary work was anonymous. These people who are madly tearing around after a reputation, and these people (worst of all) who assume that *we* are—*that* is really the appalling thing. . . . . I had an offer recently to be personalized, which really scared me. The safest way is not to tell anybody, till things are a year or two old. Let a man

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work his work in peace, and the devil take his name —the less likely to get anything more of him than that." Sill persisted to the end in not telling. He has been dead nearly thirty years; but now, at last, we are by good fortune "told."

Several chapters in the volume have for their background Sill's years of teaching, when, "by dint of killing labor," he was getting himself "into the shape of an almost tolerable schoolmaster." Such years might popularly be fancied dull living—and duller reading for a biography. But Sill's kind of scholarship, thorough-going enough, was not a dust-heap of dead facts swept up during selfish hours of withdrawal from those who had a reasonable claim upon his service. His life was the simple life of brotherhood, and truth, when he plucked it, burst into bloom fruitful and fair. "There is a world outside of Berkeley and it moves," he asserts. "I don't see that culture needs to cut us off from human warmth. . . . The very essence of culture is shaking off the nightmare of self-consciousness and self-absorption and obtaining a sort of Christian Nirvana —lost in the great whole of humanity: thinking of others, caring for others, admiring and loving others." There is a wholesome sanity in his point of view: "We get a prejudice against the emotions, when we see them acting regardless of reason; and against calculation, when it is cold and motionless. How if they both go strewing along in one current, like the light and air? . . . I suspect that to

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say that a certain motive is based on *love* is not saying that it is any lower than one based on logic." It is not surprising that even a college professor, with such an outlook on the world of books and the world of people, should reveal in his letters the portrait of a most human sort of man. Here is a home glimpse of the austere scholar whom "comparative philology, derivations, the laws of language, especially the comparative laws, interested greatly;" of the master who "expected paradigms to be so learned that they were rooted for a lifetime;" of a teacher whose students "were never allowed to have fun with a subject till they had accomplished the drudgery of it;" just a little home glimpse: "They were both (Mr. and Mrs. Sill) much taken up with the puppy. . . . Mr. Sill spent a long time over him, putting him to bed; the puppy would cry when left alone, and Mr. Sill would come back and fuss over him; at last he got a hot-water bag and put it just under the straw in the box and the puppy snuggled down to it and stopped crying at once. Mr. Sill came and told me that we 'had a good joke on that little dog; he thought it was his mother.'" Again, he may be writing as a professor of literature: "I should desire to hang my lecture room with pictures—not of the old traditional and forbidding decrepitudes, but of Milton, for example, as the charming young swordsman, with velvet cloak tossed on the ground and rapier in hand; of Homer no longer blind and prematurely agonized,

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as it were, with our modern perplexities in finding him a birthplace, but as the splendid young Greek athlete, limbed and weaponed like his own youthful vision of Apollo. Pythagoras should be a gracious stripling, crowned with ivy-buds and stretched at a pretty goat-girl's feet, touching delicately the seven-stringed lyre. Even Moses might be shown as a buxom and frolicsome boy, shying stones at the crocodiles. Only Shakespeare, of all the pantheon, would need no change. His eternal youthfulness has been too much for the textbooks and the monument makers, and we always seem to conceive of him as the fresh-hearted and full-forced man he really was." Even the passages of literary criticism that Mr. Parker admits into his volume show the characteristic humanness of Sill: "When the German poet sings of war, it is with the solemnity of Körner's *Gebet Während der Schlact.* When the French poet sings of it, it is with the 'Gai! Gai!' of Béranger. In the one, you hear the heavy tread of men, a dull, regular beat,which after all, is not very distinguishable to the ear, as to whether it be an advancing column or a funeral march. In the other you hear only the bugles ringing and shouts of enthusiasm and excitement. In their treatment of love there is even sharper contrast. The German word *liebe* has quite a different atmosphere of suggestion from the French *amour.* The German poet sings of love and home; you feel that there is at least a possibility that the passion of today will outlast the year, or the years. Constancy is one of

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its very elements. When the French poet sings of love, it is very delicate, rosy, beautiful, but we do not hear of home."

The most vivid impression one gets from the biography is the trait that shows two warring tendencies of Sill's temperament. He was an idealist, with the intense idealism of his splendid Puritan ancestry; but in his veins ran also the blood of splendid New England doctors and surgeons. Mysticism and materialism were ever active forces of his nature, and in their battling recognized no truce. Sill, the teacher, talking to his students, was Sill, the idealist: "When I look at you, it is as if I looked out on the dim, misty spaces of the dawn of a new creation, and as if I saw vague shapes of unknown possibilities forming and dissolving and reforming before me, and as if as of old the spirit of God were moving on the face of the waters." So when writing to a friend: "If we decide on service as the principal things, the question arises, Of what sort? Shall it be the washing of the feet, or the dying on the cross?—the small, common helpfulnesses chiefly, or some special great absorbing service? . . . Somebody wrote me, 'Why don't you stop trying to make something of other people, and make something of yourself?' They are hardly compatible. Supposing the same amount of good to others from either way, is there not additional gain of good in the greater abnegation of self involved in the washing of the feet theory? . . . To me Duty seems to say that

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one particle added to the world's true knowledge, or a single effort put forth to make men see higher things than food or money-getting, is better than all the bread-and-meat philanthropies." This insistent effort for the heaven that lay beyond his grasp marked his literary craftsmanship: "The more I write, the less I am satisfied," run the lines in a letter to the editor of *The Atlantic*. "Only the perfect works ought to be given to the public." During the restless days of trying himself out in the professions —law, medicine, theology—he confides to his college mate and friend, Henry Holt, the publisher: "A man must speak the truth as fast and as far as he knows it—truth to *him*. I may be in error, but what I *believe* is my sacred truth and must not be diluted. When I get money enough to live on I mean to preach religion as I believe in it. Emerson could not preach, and now I know why."

But the analyst, the dispassionate seeker of truth in matter, granted the mystic few hours of serenity. The conflict of temperament so characteristic of the poet stands out most clearly when, "given self," he undertakes "to find God." "I was thinking," he writes, "out into the material universe sweeping from star to star, system to system, till I got way off where I was *afraid* almost of the awful distance and darkness, and then there was infinite space stretching on and on, and no nearer to God. . . I wish I had more faith in men, as well as in God. I have at times dragged anchor and drifted almost

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out of sight of my belief in immortality, just from a mere consideration of the question, What is there in man worth perpetuation? . . . Do you read Spencer and Renan? I sort of shrink from these loud fellows who claim to know it all. Yet I presume it's our duty to hear what they say. Sometimes after some peculiar blessings from the good thought angels, I seem to get calmer and better views, and to feel these fellows to be all flippant and inadequate. . . . I rather incline to feel that all those people who die with no hope (or fear) of immortality are in for the biggest surprise of their lives. . . . If God would but reveal Himself in some little word that we might cling to as actual *truth,* among all the shadows. . . I can't solve the problems—only the great schoolmaster Death will ever take me through the higher mathematics of the religious principia. . . . I have prayed and do pray for light, and if I seek truth with a pure desire and intention, I believe I shall find it at last."

In spite of the richness of the biography, one feels cheated, as he closes the book. Cheated not by the biographer, but by Fate. For Sill did not live out the full years of a man's lifetime. His morning slipped into afternoon, and then, as the moving shadows dimmed the bright upland slopes—somehow it calls back again those singing lines in *Field Notes*:

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"And now the close of this fair day was come,
The bay grew duskier on its purple floor,
And the long curve of foam
Drew its white net along a dimmer shore."

So night waited for him on another coast. Perhaps, on second thought, there was no night. Perhaps, for all *true* poets—perhaps, for them—on the hills of God it is forever Day.

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## Flower-Lyrics

(Set to music by Louis Adolph Coerne)

By William Ellery Leonard

### I. WILD VIOLET

Out of the moss and under the fern
  Where no breeze blows,
Purple and pale, in woodsy dale,
  After the snows.

Dew on her stem and cool green leaf,
  Where no sun glows,
Will she be dead, ere blaze the red
  Poppy and rose?

### II. GARDEN ROSE-BUD

Tipped with white in the moon's half-light—
  Moonlight and starlight and lamp at the door—
Out in the garden afloat on the night,
  Now as the dancers are crossing the floor.

Roses in bloom with the summer's perfume,
  Roses are swaying from bodice and hair;
Out in the garden alone in the gloom,
  You on the morrow alone will be fair.

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## III. POND-LILY

Floater on the sultry pool,
Chaste and delicate and cool,
Round her weeds and sticks and scum—
Winds, be gentle when ye come!
(Lily, O Lily, my Lily!)

Cup of sunshine,—on her brim
Dragonfly aslant and slim—
Someone shouts for me to take—
No, not for my true love's sake!
(Lily, O Lily, my Lily!)

## IV. WILD ROSE

Rocks are around thee,
Thickets have bound thee,
Dust has defiled;
Yet I have found thee,
Rose of the wild.

Bees pass above thee,
Birds will naught of thee,
Rose of the wild;
Why do I love thee,
Like a lost child?

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## V. CARDINAL FLOWER

I cannot praise thee well:
  I had a lad's brief look—
What was thy shape and smell,
When, coming down the dell,
  We waded in the brook?

But as I hear thy name,
  Amid the flags I see
A long stem tipped with flame,
And think of her who came,
  The barefoot girl with me.

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# The German Drama of the Present Century

By Edward H. Lauer

To him who has followed the course of German literature since the dawn of the twentieth century, it is apparent that the change in centuries has not brought with it a new movement in the field of the drama. If we should care to look back to find the last great epoch making event, we should have to revert to the late eighties of the preceding century, to the movement which we call naturalism. At that time, the various influences both foreign and German in nature gathered, and in *Die Weber* (1892) of Gerhart Hauptmann produced a work which is a landmark in the history of the German drama. Critics may differ as to the final and permanent aesthetic value of *Die Weber*; its importance as marking a step in the history of the drama is unquestioned, and the movement of which it is the best expression has left its impress on the drama down to the present time. This is not meant to say that the dominant tone of the modern German drama is naturalism. In fact if we were to seek for a dominant tone we might come to the conclusion, and rightly so, that the most marked tendency in the last fifteen years has been a gradual turning away from naturalism and a return to the romantic. But as yet no man has appeared, no movement has crystallized, no great work has been written which shall mark the

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next step after naturalism in the history of the German drama as future generations shall write it.

When will this new epoch dawn? We have grown to look upon the naturalistic movement in Germany as historical and we seek for the "modern drama" which shall be its successor. The latter is however still in the making and will come when a genius arises in Germany, who will be able, much as Hauptmann was, to gather up the many threads and weave them all into a fabric of beautiful pattern and undoubted strength. We are too prone to call an age undramatic. The complexity of modern life in all civilized communities makes that life the fit material for drama. Schiller and Hebbel lived in any but dramatic ages and yet they gave us *Kabale und Liebe* (1784) and *Maria Magdalena* (1846)—plays deeply rooted in the times of the writers. What the age in Germany needs and is awaiting is a man, and until he comes the panorama of the passing years will present, as it does now, a chaotic turmoil of mighty striving and small ability, of many experiments and numerous failures, of great expectation and much disappointment.

None are more disappointed than the critics. It is trying to hail a man as the coming genius and then in his later plays be forced to chronicle that he has gone the way of many of his colleagues, that he was after all not the man. And when the German critic asks himself why he must wait so long, he comes forward with a long list of accusations

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which might as well have been written by an American critic in New York or Chicago. The complaints are almost the same. Too many theaters necessitate the acceptance of plays without literary merit or stage craftsmanship. To offset this lack of plays recourse is had to importation from other countries. The acting is as bad as the plays. The theaters are run for the profit of the managers and the provinces must obey the dictates of the successful manager in the metropolis. The critic searches in vain for the real modern German drama, and in the early death of such men as Karlweis and Stavenhagen he laments the fact that here were men who had given promise of writing the longed-for play.

The above problems, touched upon by the critics, are familiar to the American reader. But it must not be inferred from this fact that any surprising similarity exists between the German stage and the stage in our American cities. There are several influences at work which give the German theatrical world a distinctive and peculiar character. The first of these is that the predominating practice is what we call the repertoire or stock-company system, although the critics are beginning to complain that the two American monstrosities—the star system and the long run—have come into Germany. In the next place the Germans have set out to bring the drama to the masses. Open-air productions in the forests and fields or in huge amphitheaters seating thousands must have a reflex on

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the dramatic production, as is witnessed by the numerous *Festspiele* and pageants which are a feature of the municipal celebrations of towns both large and small. The stupendous productions organized by the wizard manager Reinhardt are part of this movement. In the third place the Germans, as well as other European peoples, have developed a large dramatic literature. Plays are printed as well as acted, and the book-marts are flooded with dramas of every conceivable type, category, classification and value. Even with the great demand for plays but a small per cent are produced. This fact and the fact that a rigid government censorship is exercised have led to the formation of numerous societies whose purpose it is to present in private assemblies, plays of interest which otherwise would not be produced. To accommodate these societies numerous little theaters have been built and put in operation. Fourthly, we must refer again to the immense number of translations from foreign tongues. The cosmopolitan character of the German stage is a matter of wonder. Almost fifty per cent of the new plays presented on Berlin stages from 1900 to 1915 were translations, and the other German cities were not far behind. This immense importation has, of course, not always redounded to the credit of the German managers, for in many cases it has served to exclude native authors of undoubted excellence. Finally this chaotic character of the theaters with their coquetting with

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popular favor has led to what may be called the "great schism" in the German dramatic world. On the one side stands the general public with the writers who write what that public wants and the critics who believe that that public is after all the final court of appeal. Bitterly opposed to them stands a smaller circle of writers with their followers, the "literati" and the "illuminati," who believe in writing what the public ought to want. Needless to say the second class is far outnumbered and much decried but considers itself modern, progressive, and uplifting.

This schism in the theatrical world makes possible some sort of classification of the writers of the present century. The vast number of diverging tendencies and movements makes all classifications more or less unsatisfactory, but in presenting briefly some sort of survey of plays and playwrights it is best to begin with the division into two general groups, the popular writers and the literati.

The first of these groups contains a number of well-known names. There is first of all a group of men who grew up under the influence of naturalism. Hirschfeld, Halbe and Dreyer are writers of strength and power who attempt to incorporate the material of their times into social dramas, but who always fall short of real fulfillment. Fulda is another writer of uneven production, a master of easy versification and yet one whose work lacks depth and sincerity. The best of this group is Suder-

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mann, who has also had an uneven development since the production of his first success *Die Ehre* (1890). He is a prolific writer of undoubted skill and facility in craftsmanship and technique, occasionally touching real poetic heights, whose work, however, is marred by a liking for striking effects, sharp antitheses, and melodramatic expedients. The truth and the convincing appeal of his works suffer because of these. All of these men stand head and shoulders above a host of popular writers whose business it is to please the populace. Blumenthal, Philippi, Kadelburg, Skowronnek, *et al.*, give what the public wants and bother but little as to the quality of their work.

Over against this group stands the coterie of the literati. It comprises but a few names and yet in these names are included the most interesting appearances in the development of the modern German drama. In the van stands Hauptmann. The present century has seen no less than ten works from his pen, diverse in character and uneven as to value. Unfinished fragments, studies in psychic phenomena, symbolistic puzzles, adaptations of mediaeval legends, and Greek epics, have passed along with plays of the crassest naturalism and others decidedly Ibsenesque in character. Of all, *Rosa Bernd* (1903) and *Gabriel Schillings Flucht* (1912) have been the best, although admiring critics would have us believe that all contain hidden springs of beauty and power. Hauptmann reveals everywhere

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an ability at characterization, an ardent poetic nature, sensitive, sympathetic, and highly cultured, but a talent which has not been able to gather itself for the great final effort. *Die Weber* (1892) remains his most important contribution.

In the class of the literati are to be included such names as Bahr, Hoffmannsthal, and Schnitzler, all of whom are men with ultra-modern tendencies. Bahr has a talent wholly undramatic in character. His pieces are causeries in dramatic form and handle the most delicate themes with almost brutal indifference. His work is clever, even brilliant at times, but more often superficial, lacking finish, and entirely negative in influence. Hoffmannsthal is above all a poet, in whose poetry the whole development of German verse seems to be epitomized. Both he and Schnitzler seem to be representatives of that hyprculture of the over-refined modern European. There is a satiety and droopiness in their work which reminds only of the tired, jaded languor of the super-aesthetic. Both are artists, whose work however is marred by pathologic tendencies, of interest to be sure, but of little lasting value.

And finally we have in this group the Mephistophelian figure of Wedekind, the great puzzle of the modern dramatic world. At times, the most irreverent of scoffers, and then suddenly the most serious of reformers. Nothing seems pure and holy to him who at the next moment is preaching purity and holiness. His tragi-comic fragments bring every

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species of perversity to view and present a world of grotesque irony whose symbol is a grinning death's head surmounted with a fool's cap. Wedekind can only be the product of a decadence, and he is in the German drama what Stuck and Klinger are in German painting, and what, in many ways, the operas of Richard Strauss are in German music.

In addition to these classes, many times independent of them and many times a part of them, are several other groups of writers of prominence and moment. Two of these groups are the writers of what the Germans call the "Standesstück" (the play presenting a picture of a certain social class) and the "Volksstück" (the play which clings to the soil). It was naturalism, with its emphasis on the presentation of the actual life, that fixed these two types, of which the modern drama has some worthy representatives. The former type is represented by Hartleben in *Rosen-Montag* (1901) and Beyerlein in *Zapfenstreich* (1903), plays which brought the life of the army officer on the stage; Ernst who portrayed the school circles in his *Flachsman als Erzieher* (1901); and the earlier play of Meyer-Förster, *Alt-Heidelberg* (1898) which was the progenitor of the long line of student plays. These plays are of course more of contemporary interest and are not to be compared in lasting value with the Volksstück. In the latter, if anywhere, is the German national drama being produced. Stavenhagen was destined to be for the North German

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drama what Reuter was for the North German novel. Schönherr, Ruederer, Thoma, and Ganghofer are writers of plays of the peasant class, and their works are destined to live. There are no more significant productions in the past decade than Schönherr's *Glaube und Heimat* (1910), Thoma's *Moral* (1910) and *Magdalena* (1912), Ruederer's *Fahnenweihe* (1908) and Stavenhagen's *Mutter Mews* (1905).

Significant perhaps for the future is the fact that the historical play is again raising its head. The death of Wildenbruch did not cause it to disappear from the boards; he had a number of successors. Weigand (whose cycle *Renaissance,* 1904, contains some of the best work of the century), Bartels, Herzog, von der Pfordten, and Gumpenberg strive for recognition with historical plays of merit and power.

And although the stage is still dominated by the realistic there is a gradual call for the romantic. All of the writers have striven to answer that call, and none more so than Hardt in his poetical *Tantris der Narr* (1908), and Stucken in his mysteries, *Gawan* (1910), *Lanzelot* (1910), and *Lanval* (1911), plays in verse of real poetic beauty and romantic atmosphere.

Scores of playwrights are courting popular favor, circling about the theaters like moths about a flame. This results in numerous tendencies, movements, and experiments very often opposed in purpose and generally disappointing in result. In all

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this crowd and confusion, however, two things stand out. The naturalistic movement with its emphasis on presenting life as it really is has opened the door for the return of the tragi-comedy. One of Wedekind's fragments bears the significant title *So ist das Leben* (1907). In the second place the whole of modern stage construction and resulting technique has caused plays to be little more than the presentation of a series of related incidents more or less closely connected. The dramatic incident is the thing, and this fact, above all else, has been the cause for the immense popularity of the one-act play.

The future? Bold is he who in this time when the very foundations of the world seem to be trembling, bold indeed is he who would set up as a prophet. Before this immense world-upheaval the thinking reader viewed with interest the German dramatic world, for here, more than anywhere else, it might be asked whether or not the whole conception of the nature of the stage was changing. The blatant spokesmen of the naturalistic movement had heralded loudly a revaluation of all values and for a time it seemed as if our conception of dramatic values must change. The extreme position has not been held, but it remains a question whether the future will not again take up the cry, and whether the new drama will not have little respect for our historic conventions of action and conflict. When a public crowds the theater to hear the soul-analyses of a Hoffmannsthal, or the undramatic fragments

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of a Wedekind, or the scintillating sketches of a Schnitzler, then it is pertinent to inquire whether our idea of the meaning of the term "dramatic" is not undergoing a change. In the future is held the answer.

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## The Goals That They Understand

By Nelson Antrim Crawford

The art impulse is one of the great universal impulses. In the grey dawn of history men and women danced their dances, chanted their songs, and carved their bone weapons. Their art, however, dealt not with a Valhalla or an Avalon or an Arcadia, but with the mountains and rivers and trees and flowers and animals among which they lived and with which they felt a vague but intimate relation. Early art invariably and inevitably treated the near rather than the remote.

Except in certain periods of history, pictorial art has kept somewhat this attitude, but for generations any poet who has used for his subject matter the things near to the people and the things which the mass of men love, has been subjected to pronounced criticism. This has been the case particularly if the poet has ventured to employ everyday forms of expression. Even so relatively conservative a poet as Wordsworth was assailed with the now familiar

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dictum, "This will never do," and critics have been saying of other writers the same thing, though usually in less forceful language, ever since. Men have attempted to put poetry into a strait-jacket of both substance and form.

It is this attitude which seems to underlie much of the adverse criticism of Vachel Lindsay's work, especially of the volume entitled *The Congo and Other Poems.* Such criticism naturally opens the whole question as to what is the proper subject matter and what is the proper form of poetry. Among the more unusual subjects taken by Mr. Lindsay are *The Congo, a Study of the Negro Race; The Santa Fe Trail; The Firemen's Ball; How a Little Girl Danced; Factory Windows are Always Broken;* and *To Mary Pickford, Moving Picture Actress.* These are not, it is to be admitted at once, the types of subject with which poetry has been usually familiar, any more than is Harriet Monroe's *State Street, Chicago,* or Sade Iverson's *Little Flowers from a Milliner's Box.* Yet unconventionality of subject does not essentially affect art values, and most clear-thinking people will continue to believe that there is no subject that is fit for thought and unfit for poetry. If this is not true—if poetry cannot be written about a firemen's ball or a city street —the whole romantic movement is a fraud, and Jeffrey, not Wordsworth, was unalterably right.

Without denying the equal poetic merit of more customary subjects, the writer is willing to go

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further and say that the subjects chosen by Mr. Lindsay are for the average reader more in accord with the art spirit than are the subjects that have won the more nearly universal acceptance of critics. Poetry originated with subjects close to the life of the people, and poetry that has filled the popular heart has taken the themes and has spoken the language of the people. It is civilized sophistication that has chosen the more remote subjects for art, and in choosing these subjects it has taken poetry away from the people and made it an intellectual and aesthetic cultus.

It is to bring poetry back to the people that Mr. Lindsay and like-minded men and women are doing their work. Negroes, factories, and moving picture actresses are far more vital figures in the popular imagination of the present day than are the heroes of history, the forges of Hephaestus, or the loves of classical antiquity and the romantic Middle Ages. There was a time when the stories of Mount Olympus were the familiar possession even of slaves. *Aucassin and Nicolette* was once as vivid in the mind of its audience as *The Grand Babylon Hotel* is to-day. To certain peoples everything in nature gave a thrill of reverence and at the same time of the feeling of unity. Under such circumstances poetry on these subjects possessed genuine popular appeal. It does so no longer. Its present appeal is to the few.

The objection to Mr. Lindsay's poems on the ground that, as he himself points out, they appeal to

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the "Higher Vaudeville" imagination is the objection of the sophisticated critic who would build about him a rose-garden-and-Walter-Pater world. If there is any sound artistic objection to vaudeville, the writer does not know it. He is inclined to think that the critic who objects to the Higher Vaudeville would listen with condescension or even contempt to the *Iliad* as Homer sung it, to *Beowulf* as it was chanted in the mead-halls, or to the simple, half-improvised melody of *Aucassin and Nicolette.*

Lyric or not, poetry was originally a song art, and the present-day value of this art is more than half recognized by the practically universal acknowledgment that poetry must be read aloud to be appreciated. Children still practice poetry as a song art in their games and pantomime plays—vaudeville unsophisticated and lovely. A poet's effort to bring something of the freshness and wonderment of childhood into the appreciation of older persons is not lightly to be discouraged. But how shall we learn except we be taught? The voice as well as the spirit of childhood is dim to most of us, and we need something more definite than exhortation to bring it back. The marginal notes which Mr. Lindsay has attached to some of his poems to assist the unaccustomed reader in chanting them are no more objectionable than a rubric in a prayer book directing the priest to turn to the people and say certain words in a loud voice. Nor, again, are they more objectionable than the directions accompanying music, or, indeed, than

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the music of a song itself. Such slight typographical eccentricities as are employed in Mr. Lindsay's books are akin to the illumination of the mediaeval manuscript. What was this but the vaudeville of the scribe? In modern times typographical emphasis has been used effectively on the editorial pages of newspapers which appeal to a wide variety of readers. If we do not need it, why should we object to its being present for those who do?

If one admits that Mr. Lindsay treats subjects having themes proper to poetry, one can hardly deny the propriety of his method of treatment. There is a certain type of artistic attitude—not unlike the attitude of the early eighteenth century—which measures poetry by formulas. Certain verse forms and certain kinds of words are regarded as essential. Certainly no one can fail to admire the beauty of form found in the poetry of Shelley, of Morris, or of Swinburne, but no discriminating man or woman could fail to be shocked by the use of these verse forms and these words in a poem dealing with a firemen's ball. The principle here involved has been recognized for ages. All of us were quite as charmed when we came across Bishop Douglas's "ragged rolkis of hard harsk whin-stane" as we were when we read the most melodious line in the *Dies Irae*.

The words and the verse forms in common use to-day, moreover, it must be remembered, are at best but a few centuries old. Rime itself is a modern invention. The type of rhythm now common in Eng-

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lish verse has existed there for less than a thousand years.

The attitude of mind that requires particular words or metrical structure or combinations of sound for appeal to the higher emotions may represent a type of idealism, but it is an idealism of objectivity. Such an idealism covers the world with the faint glow of an unrealized, indefinite golden age. A better idealism is that which depends on no words or forms or themes as formulas, but takes all things through the mind and conceives ideals subjectively. This is the method of childhood, and it is the method of the man or woman who is not bound down by sophisticated standards of criticism.

It is from this point of view that Mr. Lindsay's poetry must be appreciated. Is the negro race to be idealized in terms of the *Cid* or the *Song of Roland*? Mr. Lindsay thinks not. It is to be idealized in terms of its own racial characteristics, its "basic savagery," its "irrepressible high spirits," "the hope of its religion." No company of knights led by trumpet are the firemen. They are rather realized in the clatter and clang and crash of the burning city street. *The Santa Fe Trail* is no modern "road to nowhere;" the Middle West, which it typifies, is no earthly paradise. The automobiles that follow the trail—

"They are hunting the goals that they understand:—
San Francisco and the brown sea-sand."

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Is it not worth while that a poet of the United States should turn the minds of the people toward the goals that they understand?

That Mr. Lindsay's work represents perfection in the presentation of modern American life, no one believes, least of all Mr. Lindsay himself. Nor, for that matter, is all his poetic work devoted to an effort to realize the life of this country. It is his distinctively American poems, however, which form the most striking portion of his work. They are the poems which will turn, if anything will, the minds of everyday men and women back to the joy and solace and strength of poetry.

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## Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo and Other Poems"

To the Editor of THE MIDLAND:—

Your reviewer, writing of Vachel Lindsay's *The Congo and Other Poems* in your March number, has failed to recognize the originality of artistic invention that underlies these apparently boisterous lyrics. Taking, in many cases, the crude and raw elements of everyday American experience, Lindsay has put them through the passionate crucible of his mind and poured them out in a form that is fresh, vision-shot, and beautifully appropriate. The bang, the rush, the over-emphasis of his work, in such

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poems as *The Congo,* are indeed effects which we have not been accustomed to find in serious poetry; but precisely these elements reveal themselves as admirable pigments for the depiction of Lindsay's chosen aspects of Middle Western life. I fear that the Middle West, needlessly vain, would prefer to see itself painted as if it were an Athens or an Arcady. This is a form of juvenile romanticism which we shall outgrow.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lindsay stands as one of the most noteworthy of American poets; and I venture, by means of this letter, to call him once more to the attention of those of your readers who may have been misled into thinking that they can safely dismiss him from their minds.

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

Davenport, March 8, 1915.

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# The Midland Library

*The Social Problem* (Macmillan, New York, $1.25) is a new volume by Charles A. Ellwood, Professor of Sociology at the University of Missouri. It is a consideration of the essential factors which have come to regulate human society.

Albert Watkins is the editor of *Collections of the Nebraska State Historical Society,* recently published by the Society at Lincoln, Nebraska. This volume contains twenty-four contributions, chiefly dealing with matters of local history. The general reader will be interested in the article entitled *The Work of the Historical Society,* by John Lee Webster, and in *The Importance of the Study of Local History,* by James E. Le Rossignol.

*Practical Programs for Women's Clubs,* by Alice Hazen Cass (A. C. McClurg, Chicago, net 75 cents), is a compilation of study subjects for the use of women's clubs and similar organizations. It is designed to give practical assistance to club women, especially those in rural districts, whose sources of information are somewhat curtailed. The subjects have a wide range, and their diversity will meet all demands. Each subjects has eight divisions which may be used, if desired, for programs for one year's work.

*The Chief Contemporary Dramatists* (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, $2.75 net) is an important and valuable anthology of modern plays, prepared under the editorship of Thomas

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H. Dickinson. It includes twenty complete plays, representing the work of Wilde, Pinero, Jones, Galsworthy, Barker, Yeats, Synge, Gregory, Fitch, Moody, Thomas, MacKaye, Hauptmann, Sudermann, Brieux, Hervieu, Maeterlinck, Bjornson, Strindberg and Tcheknov. A more useful volume for the student of the modern drama could hardly have been devised.

One of the most interesting and significant of the religious publications issued by the University of Chicago Press is the new volume just announced under the title of *University of Chicago Sermons,* to which eighteen leading members of the various departments of the University of Chicago have contributed. The opening contribution is by Charles Richmond Henderson, late head of the department of practical sociology, whose reputation as preacher and scholar and social worker is international.

*Sunflowers, a Book of Kansas Poems,* is the title of a volume of poems collected by Willard Wattles and published at Lawrence, Kansas ($1.00 net). The collector has chosen those poems only that "smack unmistakably of our Kansas soil and are close to the grass roots;" the volume therefore is not to be considered a complete anthology of Kansas verse. Kansas history, Kansas pioneer life, her heroes and heroines, her corn and wheat, her birds and flowers,—all are beautifully and lovingly dwelt upon; and over all rests that native sense of longing and upward looking voiced in *The Call of Kansas,* by Esther M. Clark, *Opportunity,* by John James Ingalls, and *The Gates Ajar,* by Albert Bigelow Paine. Kansas and the Middle West are fortunate in the possession of a man competent to do this work, and willing to devote a portion of his life to it.

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# The Midland Chronicle

*Modern Philology* will hereafter appear twelve instead of ten times a year. There will be three general numbers instead of one, while the three groups of three numbers each, devoted to the respective fields of English, German, and Romance, will continue as before.

The absorbing interest of America in the European war is reflected in the April number of *The Mid-West Quarterly.* It contains the following articles: *Canada and the War,* by James E. Le Rossignol; *The Invasion of Belgium,* by Charles S. Allen; *German vs. English Aggression,* by A. D. Schrag; *Colonial Aspects of the War,* by C. D. Allin; *Diplomatic Background of the War,* by B. E. Schmitt; and *The Ideal of Peace,* by S. B. Gass.

The April number of *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* contains as its initial article a history of *The Half-Breed Tract,* written by Jacob Van der Zee. *The Career of David Rich* is discussed by George Evan Roberts. Dan Elbert Clark writes of *Some Episodes in the Early History of Des Moines. The Oldest Land Titles in the State of Iowa* is the title of a second article by Mr. Van der Zee. One of the most interesting items in the number is an account of *The Indians of Iowa in 1842,* written by two Friends who were sent to the Indians by their church in that year, and reprinted from *The Friend* of December 23, 1843.

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The April number of *The Quarterly Journal of the University of North Dakota* is devoted to the natural sciences, and includes a number of important articles. The next issue will be given over to the political and social sciences.

*The Missouri Historical Review* for April contains several articles of especial interest to students of literary progress in the Middle West. These are *Nathanial Patten, Pioneer Editor,* by F. F. Stephens; *Bibliography of the Missouri Press Association,* by F. A. Sampson; and *Books of Early Travel in Missouri,* by the same author.

The current number of *Outing* contains an article by Fred J. Lazell, entitled *A Robin Family in Photographs.* It tells the story of a family of robins, from the building of the nest to the departure of the young birds. This article is written in Mr. Lazell's sympathetic and attractive style, and with its thirteen excellent photographs forms a very interesting item to lovers of the out-of-doors. Mr. Lazell is the author of four delightful volumes of out-door studies in Iowa.

William C. Edgar contributes interesting articles on various phases of the European war to recent numbers of *The Bellman.* The latest of these, *How England Feels the War,* is illustrated with many facsimiles of posters printed by the English government in its call for volunteers. *A Migration of Poets,* by Nathan Haskell Dole, is a sketch of the personalities and works of Vachel Lindsay, Robert Frost, and Harlan Hoge Ballard, written from the standpoint of a New Englander. Recent contributors of verse include the names of Witter Bynner, Amelia Josephine Burr and Sara Teasdale.

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In the April 5th issue of *Greenwich Village*, a new periodical which bears the interesting subtitle, "A Fortnightly, Edited by Guido Bruno in his Garret on Washington Square," appears an article which will be of interest to the middle western reader. It is entitled *Publishing Book-plate Magazines*, and is contributed by H. Alfred Fowler of Kansas City, editor of *The Miscellany*, which has been mentioned before in this department. The article covers a very interesting chapter in the history of publishing in the Middle West. The magazines discussed include *The Book-plate Booklet*, *The Ex Libran*, and *The Biblio*. The four numbers of *The Ex Libran* probably constitute the finest specimen of printing yet produced in the Middle West.

Lovers of good verse find a special pleasure in reading the April number of *Poetry*. Lyric beauty, artistic craftsmanship, and genuine depth of emotion illuminate every page. In such a well balanced table of contents it is hard to pick out offerings worthy of special mention, but perhaps *The New World* by Witter Bynner, *On First Looking into the Manuscript of Endymion* by Charles Hanson Towne, the stanzas of *The Wayfarer* by Padraic Colum, and *In the Orchestra* by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson leave the most lasting impressions. John Gould Fletcher contributes an enlightening review of Miss Amy Lowell's "Polyphonic Prose"—the name which he gives to her longer works compounded of *vers libre*, prose, and traditional metrical verse. Truly this is a creditable beginning for the sixth year of the one publication devoted to enriching the possibilities of American poetry.

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# The Midland

A MAGAZINE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

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## The Annunciation

By H. B. Alexander

### Scene I

*THE PARADISE OF LITTLE SOULS. In the midst, on a shining throne, is Mary, the Mother of Jesus. About her is a choir of Guardian Angels. With hands alert and fearless feet, though each is blind-folded like a Cupid, multitudes of souls of unborn children are dancing about, as in a joyous game of blindman's-buff. All Paradise is melodious with their happy cries and baby laughter. Over the whole scene hovers a delicate rosiness, like the rosiness of early Dawn or the flush of Life in a child's cheek.*

*The Angels sing:*

Holy Mary, Blessed Mary,
Thou who art our Jesu's Mother,—
God hath given thee the portal
To the ways that men call mortal,
Sunny meadow,
Sombre shadow,
All the ways to thee are given
Little children take from Heaven.

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Holy Mary, Blessed Mary,
Thou who art dear Jesu's Mother,—
God hath placed thee nigh the portal
Children pass to life called mortal,
Thither speeding,
Hither leading,
Till thou find for one and other,
For each child its sweetest mother.

Holy Mary, Blessed Mary,
God hath given thee the portal,
With a smile to lay it open,
With a tear to seal it to,
Smiles that brighten,
Tears that lighten
Spirit children passing thro'—
Each to go the way appointed
With thy precious tears anointed.

Holy Mary, Blessed Mary,
Thou who art the Savior's Mother,—
Take and keep and guide them well,
O'er the wild ways
And the mild ways,
Back to Heaven's asphodel,—
Ever gently, gentlest Mary—
Little children are so faery!

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*The little Child-Souls, blindfold, flit hither and thither, to and fro, gaily dancing and singing:*

Here we wander, there we wander,
Seeking hither, seeking yonder,
Seeking for the Gate of Heaven
  Leading unto mother dear,—
Gentle Mary, loving Mary,
  Guide us each to mother dear.

*One Group:*

Little sister, little brother,
Canst thou find thy sweetest mother?

Tell me, wilt thou love her only?
  Tell me, will she hold thee dear?
Little children oft are lonely
  If sweet mother be not near.

*Another Group:*

Little brother, little sister,
Hast thou found her, hast thou kist her?

Tell me all her radiant beauty—
  Tell me, tell me, will she be
Glad to teach thee every duty
  Children learn at mother's knee?

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*All:*

Little sister, little brother,
What sweet mother shall thine be?

*A little Voice:*

Mine shall be a flower Lady—
  Violets shall be her eyes,
And her mouth the morning roses
  Caught with Heaven's fresh surprise!

*A second Voice:*

Mine shall be a wonder Lady—
  Everything that precious is,
Gems of joy and jewelled sunbeams,
  She shall give me with her kiss!

*A third Voice:*

Mine shall be a singing Lady—
  Laughter-clear will be her eyes,
And her song will be an echo
  Brought with me from Paradise!

*All:*

Little sister, little brother,
Canst thou find thy sweetest mother?
Little brother, little sister,
Hast thou found her, hast thou kist her?

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As we wander, as we wander,
Seeking hither, seeking yonder,
Seeking for the Gate of Heaven
  Leading unto mother dear,—
Gentle Mary, loving Mary,
  Guide us each to mother dear.

*They circle about with eager hands and joyous poise. As they near the shining throne, Mary draws one of the Child-Souls, all unconscious of her guidance, apart from the others. At her touch the blindfold falls from its eyes, and there opens before it, as from a Gate of Heaven, a view of the World's Garden, beautiful with fields and flowers. The Child-Soul, ecstatically clasping its little hands, cries out:*

I have found it! I have found it!
I have found the Gate of Heaven!

*All the little Souls, in a jubilant flutter:*

Thou hast found it, little brother?
  Thou hast found it, sister mine?
Tell us, tell us, doth it open
  Into gardens fine?

*The little one:*

O the glowing, glowing gardens!
  O the golden, golden flowers!

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Hide-and-seek of light and shadow
All the happy, laughing hours!

*All:*

Tell us, is there some one waiting,
With the dream-light in her eyes?
Tell us, is her face illumined
With her fancy's bright surmise?

*The little one:*

Oh, I see a wonder Lady . . . .
Sweetest Mother . . . can she be? . . .
Guess who cometh out of Heaven
With a love-gift unto thee!

*The little one darts forth impulsively, while at the behest of Mary the Angel of the Annunciation goes with it to guide and guard its journey down into the World's Garden.*

*The little blindfold souls sing after the one departing:*

Fare thee well, O little brother,
Little sister, fare thee well!
Loving Mary keep and guide thee
Back to Heaven's asphodel.

*Resuming their joyous dance:*

Where we wander, where we wander,
Seeking hither, seeking yonder,

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Little sister, little brother,
Seeking each his sweetest mother,—
Loving Mary, guide us well!

## Scene II

*A COTTAGE IN THE WORLD'S GARDEN. A porch with a rose-vined lattice opens upon a garden bright with flowers—violets and pansies, forget-me-not and mignonette, pale lily-of-the-valley and shining marigold; there are trees in blossom and everywhere profusion of beautiful roses. In the shelter of the lattice is seated a Lady, sewing with fine stitches. She hums to herself a drowsy melody. . . . With a merry laugh she drops her sewing and throws up her hand as if to catch some one who had covered her eyes from behind.*

"Guess who? . . .
" 'Tis thee, little Lover, 'tis thee!"

*She catches herself, in a self-amused way:*

"Nay, nay; not yet. . . . But bye and bye . . . my little one!"

*And gazing afar, into the blue shining sky, a kind of glory, as from the Madonna's own halo, falls upon her. After a time she again takes up her sewing, but with a new exaltation on her face. All the World*

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*is preternaturally quiet, save for a faint sound like the hum of celestial wings departing.*

*The Lady breaks into song:*

O he shall be a Captain
And sail the Seven Seas
Which are the Seven Ages
That count life's mysteries:

A babe, a boy, a youth, a man,
A father, elder, sage,—
And aye a finer nobleman
With each renewing age!

But first of all a little Child—
Ah, dearest unto me
Will be the little Babe of mine
That he must ever be. . . .
The kingly Babe, like Mary's Son,
That he must ever be. . . .

*The Lady pauses, smiling thoughtfully; then resumes her singing:*

And she shall be a winsome maid,
All laughter and bright dew,
With wealth of golden love to give
And a song that charmeth two.

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Fair flowers will blossom in her path,
And all her ways be strown
With petals of the loveliness
By her sweet presence sown.

But first of all a little child—
A Babe that nestleth here
To fill the spirit's empty place
And be a mother's cheer. . . .

*As the song ends, once more the Lady looks up into the blue sky, and once more the glory enhallows her face. Reverently she prays:*

O Mary, Jesu's Mother,
Who dost in Heaven dwell,
And givest gift of motherhood,—
I pray thee, guide me well,
That I may lead the little feet
Through all the ways of men—
The mild ways,
The wild ways,—
To Heaven and thee again.

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## The Prairie Seasons II

## Summer Days by Prairie Waters

By Selden L. Whitcomb

Ten days ago we watched the passing of Spring in the valley of the Arkansas. The fields of winter wheat were almost ready for the harvest, though the mown alfalfa lay wasting under heavy rains. Amid the grasses of the right-of-way bloomed the spiderwort, the red-purple mallows, and, true flower of the southern prairies, the most glorious of evening primroses, the large, white *speciosa*.

Northeastward, for six hundred miles. Floating cotton-down; clamoring young robins; catalpa blossoms white upon the lawns; sand-bar willows in bloom along the shores. Far northward, the new corn was scarcely visible; in many fields, plow, harrow, and cultivator were stirring soils almost as bare as in winter. In the panorama of the herbal flowers, the evening primroses yielded to the delicate racemes of prairie larkspur, and later, these to white anemones in crowded areas and to neighboring sisterhoods of pink-red phlox. Finally, the columbines nodded greeting from the wooded, stony cliffs of the Great River.

Today the wind blows strong across the swampy flats and the wide, dark waters, over these high banks crowned with the "Indian Mounds;" bearing the deep notes of a western meadowlark, and rustling the leaves of the poplar, elm and oak. The view

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of winding river, grassy islands, and wide-sweeping bluffs is glorious. The crickets chirp incessantly. From lawn or tree top or ravine shrubbery, or the air above, now and then float the songs of the robin, social sparrow, song sparrow, goldfinch, yellow warbler, rose-breasted grosbeak and woodthrush. The large solomon's seal is in dainty green fruit, but for us it is the heavy fruit of the plebian dock on the grassy slope riverward that gives truest sign of summer's arrival.

Not all the signs are present. There was frost in this vicinity last night. But some day erelong the first "real summer weather" will sweep over the prairie land and the master thought of millions of her residents will be how to escape or to endure the heat.

Beyond the prairies, westward, lie the mountains and the sea; eastward and northward, the Lakes, the mountains and the sea. For certain sections of Kansas and Missouri the Ozarks offer a refuge of hills near at hand—of breezy, timbered hills, almost of mountain height, of secluded valleys, rocky ledges, and rapid, tumbling streams. As one stands by the Pullman at Goodland, on a summer afternoon, though the sun may burn the skin, the never-ceasing wind is the wind of the plains, not of the prairie. A few hours westward rise, in wintry coldness, the goals desired and sought by thousands, the peaks of Pike and Gray. Journeying northeast from the Twin Cities, after the oatfields shimmering in the

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heat, one soon welcomes the solemn timber of the pine lands, the black, fantastic shapes of burned boles, the tamarack swamps, and before many hours, the broad ever-summerless waters of Superior. In spite of the once familiar, "I spent a winter in Duluth last summer," the city at the head of the Lakes has its warm days. But there is an island of the blest in the Great Water itself on which, one ventures to affirm, since the days of Moses no really hot day has dawned.

The early travelers often described the scenery of the Upper Mississippi as "mountainous;" but in their enthusiasm they made many an error in vocabulary. The prairie proper has no mountains, scarcely even a butte—only bluffs and "mounds," hills and "coteaux." Even these in many a locality offer welcome relief in the summer season; but for the majority of those who abide on the prairie through June, July and August, the chief solace of nature in the hot days is—Water. Water, in the well, in the spring, the creek, the river, the pond and the lake. Of prairie waters in summer the writer can summon varied memories that reach far into past years, that record experiences over an area of five hundred thousand square miles. Of yet earlier years, are not the chronicles written in the pages of Pike, Lewis and Clarke, L—— of the 'Journal of Marches,' Mrs. Robinson, Hamlin Garland, Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Thoreau, and a hundred others?

In the early days in South Dakota, the problem of

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drinking-water was an insistent one—for villager, claim-holder, and surveying party . In some cases, rain from the cottage roof gave the solution; in others the well laboriously dug through loam and clay. It was almost a gala day in one little town on the Turtle when, full, strong, high, burst from its deep sources the first artesian water of the Valley. All day labor under a burning sun often gave the leveler and the rodman a very lively sense of the thirst of the desert. For shade there was only the coat flung over the tripod. Instruments left on some gravelly knoll covered with prickly pear and "buffalo beans," the two would tramp far across the open prairie, burning in blinding sunlight, blistering in the weary, unceasing wind, to the nearest claim shanty, in search of water. Back again on the line soon the insatiable thirst returned. At night, when the smudge was in the tent, the men sat in loose circle on the parched spear grasses, drawing lots to decide who should fill the water bucket at the settler's well in the prairie sod a half-mile away. It was then that Schultz, the irrepressible, educated in Liverpool, always singing in English, German or French, would shout out cheerily across the prairie once owned by Napoleon,

"Marchons, marchons! Formez vous battailons!"

How sweet in the cooler morning air rose the low, blurred line of the Wessington Hills, twenty miles to the southwest!

The story of the spring, the slough, the creek and

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the pond, is too long to relate here. In many a shady hilly region of Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, and eastward, the camping party and the picnickers locate by a flowing spring, sometimes in a remote woods, sometimes in the park of a great city. All summer long by the pavilions of Excelsior and Colfax the weary and the sick drink the healing mineral waters. In a thousand sloughs and ponds the cattle stand knee-deep on July days; the boys of farm and village swim or angle for catfish and suckers or throw mud balls at the anxious redwings. Toward evening, one driving across country roads feels suddenly the cooler air of the creek bottom, at the end of the long hill, near the rough lumber bridge.

A half dozen great prairie states have located their capitals on the Missouri, the Mississippi or their tributaries. How rich and abundant our impressions of prairie rivers in summer—impressions from personal experience, from the pioneer's rambling talk, from the printed record of travelers! In the roll of eminent names, after the Great Two would follow the Arkansas, the Kansas, the Platte, the Cedar, the Iowa, the Des Moines, the Illinois, the Rock, the James, the Minnesota and the Wisconsin. Here a bird and there a flower; here a swollen, threatening stream, and there a placid current with a lazy canoe; here a silent, solitary stretch, and there a foot suspension bridge swaying beneath a crowd of devotees of a riverside Chautauqua.

Today, looking from the mounds down the Missis-

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sippi, we forget for a moment the speeding automobiles, the great city behind us, the steamers "Red Wing" and "Hiawatha," and the barges crowded with dancers of many a nationality. We remember Pike. It is one hundred and ten years ago this summer since he toiled up the Great River. With what strange effects of remoteness his language now reaches us. "I immediately discharged the hire of the Indians, and gave Mr. Blondeau a passage to the Prairie des Chiens." His record is quaint from words and phrases of the by-gone days of exploration—savannah, engagés, aborigines, peroques, peltries, a highly cultivated plantation, Rapids de Moyen and batteaux.

From this city, a little more than a half century ago, Thoreau began his trip up the Minnesota River. Ill and near to death, his recorded impressions are scant, though the June letter to Sanborn is precious to those who love the poet-naturalist of Walden. It must have pleased Thoreau to meet his kinsfolk, the red men, in their native regions on the outskirts of civilization. How many comparisons his senses and his imagination must have made between this strange prairie river and the long-familiar Concord at home!

In the summer of 1804, Lewis and Clarke were winding their way up "Big Muddy." As we caught a glimpse of the Floyd monument from the car window a few days ago, we recalled something of the sacrifice as well as the sturdiness and the spirit of

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adventure of those early explorers. Among other hostilities offered them, was that of the fierce prairie wind of summer, "blowing clouds of sand in such a manner that I could not complete my plan in the tent," and rolling the boat "in such a manner that I could do nothing in that." But there were other matters to note: the welcome breeze cooling the atmosphere on many an August evening; the "groves of timber," the immense masses of drift-wood fuel; the elk, deer, beaver, badgers; the ripe wild grapes, the prairie clover, the honeysuckle; the wild geese and wild turkeys, the innumerable pelicans; and even the first-heard cry of the katydid. Surely for all but Sergeant Floyd those were rich summer days from the Kansas to the James.

Less scientific, less adventurous, but rich in personal reward, was our own August day at Bismarck a few years ago. How picturesquely the Capitol loomed across the broad prairies! In a tree bordering its lawns, a brood of Arkansas flycatchers were still on the nest, the parents as bustling and vociferous as those of our first acquaintance many years ago. The fields in front were partly colored by the golden rays of *lepachys;* here and there among them the rich brown tints of "the most beautiful" *(lepachys columnaris pulcherrima),* long forgotten, but potent now to arouse memories of boyhood rambles over the treeless territorial prairies. Strolling toward the low bluffs of the River we found two blossoms new to us—the large, white "moonflower,"

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and, surely, the most exquisite of the prairie milkweeds, the *asclepias, speciosa.*

A volume might be written on the natural and social life in summer by the prairie lakes. For one of these waters, something worthy has been expressed by a real literary master—Hamlin Garland, in "Boy Life on the Prairie." How many remain, not unbeloved, not even unadvertised, but unwedded to literature! Each has its individual natural character, its historical associations, its special service to the people of the prairie. Some of these lakes have an exquisite beauty of curving shore line and wooded islet; of shimmering waters beneath the sun and misty waters beneath the moon; of surf wind-driven on sandy beaches. A passing glimpse at two, in different states, hundreds of miles apart, must close our present sketch.

It is early in June, and so far the season has been cool. In the early evening the few guests gather round a real stove fire in the hotel office. The cottages are nearly all closed, and of forbidding wintry aspect. Morning, noon and night, the rain falls, and across the lawns pass workmen in oilskin slickers and rubber boots instead of young women in summer gowns and dainty slippers. Out of doors all is dark, the lawns are soaked, the trees and shrubbery are dripping. Yet along the sandy shore, or under the oaks, or by the swamp grasses, many wild flowers are in bloom—spiderwort, anemones, false spikenard, waterleaf, wild roses, phlox and fleur-de-lis.

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In the intervals between showers or even in the rain, sing many birds of the prairie summer—the red-eyed vireo, warbling vireo, catbird, robin, bluebird, yellowthroat, wood peewee, yellow warbler, wood thrush, and Baltimore oriole. Kingfishers rattle among the oaks. At dusk two little girls are gathering driftwood for a cottage fire. A heron flies off over the lake from a secluded point on the shore, and here or there above the waters fly the long-winged terns and the white gulls hover. Gray water meets gray sky across spaces wide enough to give a deep impression of solitude and repose. The shore lines and the sky lines are varied and beautiful enough to satisfy one's imagination.

There are bamboo rods in front of the stores. We have croppies for breakfast and black bass for supper; the talk of the men at the barber shop is of fishing, past, present and future,—and of boats. The taxidermal duck at the hotel is as appropriate a symbol here as the head of the buffalo at Grand Island, of a moose at Duluth or of a mountain goat at Butte City. More local, but of deeper significance, are the granite shaft, memorial of the state to the pioneers massacred by the Sioux, the old log cabin, museum now of Indian relics, tomahawk and war club included, and the courteous, famous prairie heroine, who escaped the massacre and survived the terrible days of captivity fifty years ago.

Fancy passes in a flash over many a league to another lake, and over the months of summer to the

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first days of autumn. In the fertile prairies of this region the oat fields are in weather-worn shock and the great tobacco fields are being harvested. At the lake, the close of the season is at hand. The hours along the shore are calm and reflective, almost solitary. Now and then a kingfisher darts to the water from his perch; a nuthatch *quirks* among the oaks, but the Baltimore oriole by the big elm is silent, dreaming of the South. There are no fluent songsters. The night falls early, autumnal, on deserted lawns and porches. Not all the summer flowers have passed; but the supremacy belongs to those of September, conspicuous among them the rattlesnake root, the white snakeroot, the trumpet weed, the thoroughwort and the goldenrods. For simple signs of the waning of summer, these two are sufficient for the prairie rambler: the full-grown pods upon the common milkweed, and the brilliant display of the golden blossoms of the *gerardia grandiflora*. Soon autumn will reign again on the prairies, from the Arkansas to the Saskatchewan, from the border of the plains to the border of the Great Lakes.

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## If One Should Come

By Mahlon Leonard Fisher

If One should come from out the Calm tonight,
Leaving the Grievous Question yet unsolved,
I think I should not marvel how involved
Can every beauty be in Beauty's sight.
I think I should not wish for nor delight
In the old close communion, soul with soul;
Nor care to let dead years exact their toll,
Nor old emotions move me with their might;
But hasten to receive her as a queen,
Not wholly blameless, who hath gained what Age
Must humbly ask for; who, with Youth for gage,
Won ingress to the Hidden and Unseen;
Who, with her puissant beauty, purchased all;—
As one who tempted Death and caused his fall!

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## The Alchemy of the Lady

By Robert A. Gilmore

And this was the last day of the grubbing.

The April sun had just dislodged a clumsy, blue-black roll of mist, and was now shining redly down on the steaming marshes, on the mottled frogs, and upon the bluets with their yellow hearts. Tom Hennage, his boyish blue eyes blinking, and his baggy overalls plastered half way up to the knees with yellow clay, propped his axe and grubbing hoe against a log and looked about the clearing.

Steaming piles of brush dotted the place. Over by the largest pile, a brook, the Sligo, was foaming along. Bordered on the left by steep bluffs, a narrow, muddy road tagged the winding course of the water. Dense growths of pine skirted the base of the bluffs, while on the higher land that swelled away into low hills, the grey of an oak, the white of the dogwood, and the soft red and brown of the swamp maples appeared. And as Tom Hennage, still puckering his eyes, picked up his axe, a ripple of wind swept down through the maples and over the brook, bearing spicy smells of sassafras and pines, and the faint freshness of peach blossom.

Choosing out a straight, solemn-looking pine tree, the boy swung his axe, and soon the boom of his strokes was echoing through the wood. White, sappy chips flew. The boy worked on, stopping only

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to brush the red hair from his forehead and to take long deep breaths.

Then, as the sun gradually penetrated through the yellow-green reeds to the spongy ground, some frogs croaked, lazy snails crawled upon the sand; the willows and allspice bushes fringing the brook stirred; angry yellow-hammers screeched in the top of a white old birch, while above the tree-line clouds went swimming along in the depths of the sky.

The chopping had ceased. Suddenly something cracked, and as Tom ran back from the tree, the big pine shook itself, tremulously swayed, and then thundered headlong to the ground. An intense silence followed. The mating oriole stopped singing, and even the persistent notes of a peewee were interrupted. Then the coaxing tones of a man's voice were heard, and a short middle-aged farmer in high, red-topped boots and a broad-brimmed felt hat trudged around the bend of the road. He was leading a crest-fallen horse hitched to a tumbled-down cart.

"Come now, Molly. Come on. Steady."

Tom turned his head. The man and horse were splattering along slowly.

"Good morning, there," Tom called. "What's the trouble now, Akins?"

Akins pulled at his horse's head and then held up a broken strap: "That you, Tom Hennage? Come over here," he ordered good-naturedly.

Tom plunged through the reeds and across the

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brook. Akins was wiping his face with a red handkerchief when the boy reached him.

"Have a runaway?" Tom asked between breaths.

"Pretty near," said Akins, his sober grey eyes turning a shade darker as he dangled a piece of broken harness over his arm. "Them pesky machines! Met one up by the turn of the road. A woman was driving it. Had a red veil and a horn that was enough to scare old Nick himself. I venture Molly's the safest horse in the state but she got skittish this morning." As he spoke, Akins made occasional vicious jabs at his long wiry mustache.

Tom took the strap. "Put a rivet in here, this way, and that'll fix it." Then he stopped. "They never come by here."

Akins looked up: "What, the machines? I reckon that's no bad luck. That's the reason I took this by-road,—didn't want to meet any more."

"It's lonesome, though." Tom put one of his calloused hands on the horse's back.

"Maybe," replied Akins. "Where's your old man? Haven't seen him since December. Pretty late for grubbing, the last of April, ain't it?"

"Yes, it is. Dad went up to Hyattsville to-day to get some seed. We're clearing this for a garden."

Akins did not answer. He rolled up the strap, pulled his mustache, and picked up the whip.

"Well, I reckon Molly and I must be jogging along. I'm glad I don't have to grub to-day. But

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then you young fellows can stand it. How old are you, Tom, anyway?"

"Seventeen, I guess."

"Seventeen," Akins reiterated. "I declare, Tom, it seems just like yesterday since your old woman died. And then you was a whining, red-faced, little monkey." He grinned. "I reckon you have been lonesome," he added with a kinder look, "and your old man, well, he ain't no mammy to cuddle you. But, goodbye, Tom." He jerked at the horse's bridle and they started down the road. Tom watched them. After Akins' talk to Molly had died away, he flung himself down by the brook-side and took a long drink. The water was ice cold. Little eddies of foam, collected about the bank, tickled his lips as the brook swish-swashed over the rocks. Rising, he noticed from the reflection where a daub of clay had streaked his forehead. A flock of crows cawed noisily above him as he went up the banks to his work and commenced to strip the pine of its branches.

Two hours passed. With gallant endurance the peewee was again bewailing its heart-aches, while the oriole was in the ecstacies of a wondrous serenade. Tom was hacking away the last few limbs. Two or three twigs snapped.

"Look, mama, look. Isn't that a big tree?"

Tom wheeled around to the speaker.

"Did you chop it?" a little yellow-haired girl with a chirping voice was speaking to him. By her side

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stood a lady with a scarlet veil tied over a wide-brimmed hat. Her eyes were brown; they were smiling at him, and her lips were puckered. A sprig of arbutus and a few bluets had been pinned to her loose grey coat.

The little girl was imperious. "Did you chop it?" she demanded.

"No'm, I grubbed it."

"You—what?"

Tom looked at the lady. Soon a grimy hand rubbed the clay off his forehead.

"He grubbed it—dug it out by the roots. Don't you see the big hole?" the lady explained. Then she turned to Tom. "Isn't it hard work?" she asked.

"Yes'm," Tom swallowed. The last time he had gone to Hyattsville for seed, he had wandered down the main street, and seen ladies, several of them, with big flowing coats. He stopped and picked up the axe.

"Come, dear, we must be going. Somebody will run away with the car. We were hunting for flowers," she smiled and nodded to Tom, "and left the car at the bend in the road."

The little girl protested: "But," she said, "I wanted some azaleas and a-a-drink."

The axe dropped to the ground. Tom gave an appealing look to the lady. There was no pucker about her lips now; her eyes, too, were sober and earnest.

"I reckon—I know—where she can get a-drink.

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Up at the spring—yonder," he spoke slowly. The words scarcely came out of his mouth.

The child clapped her hands. "You are very kind," the lady said. "If it won't be too much trouble."

For answer, the boy turned to the little girl: "Come."

He led them a short distance over the soft, sandy banks of the brook. Once, in a marshy place, the lady lost her rubber, and as Tom went to get it, he tripped over a log, whereupon the little girl laughed; then while the lady put on the rubber, Tom caught the shimmer of a patent leather boot. Glancing down at his own shoes, he stared at a crack through which a bare toe showed.

The little girl caught up with him. She surveyed him curiously, noticing his big dirty hands, his baggy overalls and the red bandana handkerchief tied at his neck.

"What is your name?" she finally ventured.

"Tom."

"Mine's Doris."

She waited for a moment, then tried another question.

"What makes your hands so dirty?"

"Doris!" came a warning voice from behind them, but they had reached the spring.

It was only a rusty tin cup which they had to drink from, but the water was clear and cold. After Doris

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had gulped down two cupfulls, the lady drank, and returned the cup.

"Such delicious water!"

The little girl poked her flowers at Tom and then drew back, "Thank you, Mr. Tom," she said.

"But we must go now, dear. It is past luncheon time already."

"I'm not hungry, mama!" This came with a pout,—then her face brightening—"And we haven't got any azaleas, either."

"Never mind! Mother wanted them just as bad as you did,—but I suppose it's too early for them." Then turning to Tom, she said: "Thank you ever so much for the drink. This is the way to the road, isn't it?"

"Yes'm, over there is the path."

Doris slowly tucked a hand in her mother's. When they were almost out of sight she turned, waved her other hand vigorously and cried: "Good bye." Soon, the bushes screened them from sight, but not before the lady had turned and nodded too.

Tom went slowly back to his work, and picked up the axe. Overhead, a single white cloud was floating. A tanager, which had rested for a moment on the brush-pile nearest him, zigzagged over to a dogwood tree; there it again rested, its scarlet half hidden by the white blossoms; then it was gone, had lost itself in the fragrant mazes of the allspice bushes. Tom threw down his axe with a jerk. He ran to the brook, jumped over the stones, and looked down the

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road. At the bend he saw the flutter of a scarlet veil.

## II

All through the day, the south wind had been thieving perfume from the blue-bells and pansy violets, from the arbutus and swamp maples, from the peach and pear trees, had been mixing the essences together and scattering them broad-cast through the air. Now that the big full moon was up, the woods smelt sweeter than ever. At least Akins thought so as he jerked Molly up in front of Tom's home, and clambered out of the cart. Tom's home was a weatherbeaten, slab hut, facing the east and banked in by solemn pines. As Akins walked up the path to the door, he could hear some pigs squealing, and once a cow bawled. The moonlight was shining on a cistern, and on a few pails and some rubber boots scattered around it. Out of the shadow, a dog rose and limped away, while another waited to growl, and then followed. Through the open door a smell of bad tobacco drifted.

Akins coughed and knocked.

"Who is it? Come. Tom left the door open."

"It's me," said Akins, acting upon the invitation, "reckoned I'd drop in a minute, hearing you'd gone to Hyattsville to-day."

As he entered a man rose awkwardly, took his pipe out of his mouth and placed a chair. He was a loosely-framed man, somewhat stooped, clothed in

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overalls and a pair of muddy boots. A shaggy growth of beard outlined his square chin, and as shaggy a growth of eyebrows intensified the gloom of his eyes.

"Glad to see you," he finally drawled. "Yes, I went up to git some seed potatoes mostly."

Akins had seated himself, and placed his hat beside his feet. His grey eyes blinked as they peered about the room. A lamp with a dingy chimney put its feeble shadows upon the board wall, and the pile of blankets tumbled on a bed at the rear of the room. In a corner nearest the cook-stove, three or four white garments were drying. Huge spider webs swayed from the streaked ceilings as the draft from the open door blew the spirals of tobacco smoke upwards.

"Any news, Hennage?" he queried at last.

"Yes! chicken thieves. They were saying in Beech's drug store that Marse Thomson, he owns an eighty east of Carroll's—well, that he shot at a fellow the other night, but he got away."

"Was he alone?"

"Yes, prob'ly some nigger. All the big fellows is scared."

"Uh-huh?"

"And Henry Carroll, well, he lost his Easter pullets last year, and he ain't taking any chances now. They say he's got two men with guns, guarding the place night and day."

"Well," Akins ejaculated.

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Hennage put his pipe in his mouth slowly.

Akins looked up at the spider webs.

"What else did you hear?"

"Nothing, I reckon."

There was a silence.

"Where's the boy?"

"Tom?"

"Yes."

"Out milking."

"Getting to be quite a boy."

"Uh-huh."

"What are you going to make of him?"

There was no answer.

"S'pose tain't any of my business, but he's seventeen now. He told me so. I see him to-day,—and he ain't had no mother, John. You ought to think of that now. He ought to have a chance—pretty soon. Some schooling, these woods—git him out of them. He ain't ever been anywhere 'cept Hyattsville; only there a couple times, I reckon."

Hennage refilled his pipe, pressing down the tobacco absently; then he lit it.

"There's plenty of time. Then there ain't the money."

"But you can give him sort of a chance. He won't want to keep a-grubbing." Then he rubbed his hands together. "Besides you ——— what's comin', you don't know, John. S'pose you know you ain't so young as you onc't was." Akins stopped. Hennage clutched the arms of his chair.

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"That's him now. The cow always bawls when he leaves her. He's kind of late tonight."

As Tom entered and placed a milk bucket beside the door, John Hennage turned, "You had better eat your supper," he said, "there's some potatoes and bacon in the oven."

"I don't want any supper, I ain't hungry."

The boy turned to Akins, and picking up the bucket, poured the milk into some crocks. When he had finished, he lounged over to the door and sat down on the door step. The mild April air was drifting into the close-smelling room.

Akin's big hand tapped on his chair. Suddenly he cleared his throat. "Speaking of Henry Carroll, makes me think," he commenced. "I met his wife and girl in their machine to-day. After scaring Molly out of her wits, she stopped the car and asked me,"—Akins gave an impressive pause—"she asked me if I'd seen any azaleas out yet. She seemed to want 'em real bad. Looked kind of disappointed when I said I hadn't."

Akins moved his chair so he could see the back of the boy in the doorway. But the boy neither moved nor turned his head.

"They say," said Hennage, "she's a mighty nice woman."

"Yes, sir, that she is, kind-hearted too. Ain't I ever told you about that chicken deal I had with 'em?"

"No," answered Hennage.

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"Well," Akins slapped his knees, "you know Henry Carroll takes a lot of stock in his chickens. I s'pose that's why he's so dead on chicken thieves. Well, I was up there buying some chickens one time. Carroll tied 'em together by their legs. She, the Missus, comes along, and first thing I know he had 'em in crates. She didn't cry about it; she only looked and talked low, but—" he added with a chuckle, "but old Carroll put 'em in crates just the same. I wonder how she ever come to marry a man like Harry Carroll."

The two men continued their talking, and the boy sat quietly in the doorway. Akins gossiped about Mrs. Carroll and her new automobile; Hennage told about his gardening.

Finally, Akins got up. He shook hands with Hennage and slapped Tom on the back.

"Well," he admonished, "I reckon maybe this spring weather gits a little too much for you."

Akins had reached Molly and was untying the reins when he felt a hand on his shoulder. Turning about he saw Tom Hennage.

The boy commenced to speak: "Akins," he asked, digging his foot into the ground, "was her eyes sort of brown and was her little girl with her?"

"What?"

"That woman, she wanted the azaleas, the one you met this morning."

"Yep, she's the one. Why?"

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Down in the marshes by the brook, the gradually increasing chorus of frogs could be heard. A little current of wind scurried about the men's feet, caught some old leaves, played with them an instant and then was gone; a moment later and the barn door creaked on its hinges.

"Nothing," said Tom.

After Akins had climbed into the cart, Tom walked back to the house. John Hennage was standing in the doorway. He reached out and placed both his hands on Tom's shoulders. Neither spoke for a moment. Then Hennage began; his voice sounded strange and husky.

"Tom, you'd just as soon stay with your old man, hadn't you?"

The boy winced a little at the fierceness of the grasp.

"Why, yes," he faltered. "I guess so."

The grasp on his shoulders relaxed. "Your mammy," Hennage was saying, then he stopped. "I guess the ride to Hyattsville kind o' did me up today. I guess I'll go to bed."

The man turned back into the house. Presently, Tom heard the thud of a pair of boots as they dropped to the floor. Then all was quiet.

## III

The father was soon asleep. When Tom heard his deep breathing, he commenced to whistle for the dogs, but stopped. The dogs were always gone at

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night time now. Even Jack would leave on these warm, balmy nights.

A wind coming from the southeast, damp and fragrant, stirred through the hedge of bushes in front of him.

The winter's work was all done, the grubbing was finished. Tom felt he should be happy and tired. But tonight he did not feel sleepy; he was excited and hungry all over. Every time he drew a deep breath the blood would rush to his head, and, as he rubbed his fingers through his hair, they tingled just as when he patted Jack.

Yes, the grubbing was over; but tomorrow they would plant potatoes. Would it always be this way? Some white clouds, silvered by the moon, were scudding over the sky. All day long, things had been growing, moving, disappearing. Everything was restless; the Sligo, the wind, the trees, the flowers, the dogs; even the lady with the little girl had disappeared; the lady whose eyes had smiled so kindly on him; and he would not see her again, even if she did come back to the spring, for they would plant potatoes in the upper garden first. Again, the blood rushed to his head. He must act, move, walk. Down the path, he followed to the road. The air was heavy with smells: the freshness of the pine, the piquancy of the allspice, the bitter-sweet of the sassafras, the honey of the arbutus, all were mixed together in one lavish whole. Every breath of it sent the blood tingling through his body.

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The road was muddy, and the moonlight was shining on puddles of water. Stretching out toward the east, the hills dipped and swelled till they blended with an inky cloud. Sometimes, as the road twisted and turned, it led the boy across the Sligo on a creaking wooden bridge. Occasionally he passed a cabin and a little clearing, but it was mostly bluffs with stumpy Jersey shrubs. Now and then he could hear the baying of dogs, sometimes sharp and shrill, sometimes quavering and indistinct. Once, on turning the road, there came a sudden flapping of wings. It was only some frightened buzzards, however, circling away from the branches of an old oak. The clouds were gone. Aided by the trees, the moonlight paved the way with all sorts of ghostly figures.

Now, from the trickle of the water as it lapped over the stones, Tom recognized the spring he had visited with the lady and the little girl. A frog splashed as Tom fumbled for the cup; and when he dipped into the water, he could see the crinkled-up, rippling reflection of the yellow moon. The water tasted cool. The lady had liked it, too. Would she ever come back again to the spring? He sat down on the bank and stared at the water as it swirled over the stones, his head propped on his hands. If the lady were only there to get another drink. The little girl had wanted a drink and the azaleas. He lifted his head. Perhaps he could find some azaleas! It was moonlight. He would pick them, and take them, —he would take them to her tonight! Then she

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would smile, and her eyes would shine on him, as they had on the little girl in the morning. He jumped up and was out on the road again.

As he came at last to the house by the cross-roads leading into Hyattsville, several dogs barked. Two of them ran out to meet him. One was Jack.

With Jack following, he left the road and commenced to climb a dusky hill thickly covered with pine. Stumbling along he worked his way toward the top while the moonlight, filtering through the pine boughs, distilled a pleasant, sappy odor from the needles on the ground. Gradually, as the trees became thinner, laurel and bushy green growths appeared, but although it was certainly a good place for arbutus, there were no azaleas.

Panting, the boy reached the top. Here, the wind, coming from the southeast, blew sweet and cool against his face. Jack growled as he crouched by Tom's feet.

From where he was, Tom could see far over the country. A few lights twinkled in the black stretch of valley beneath him. Once a dog barked, and then came the distant echo of a gun.

Tom shivered.

Nearer to him, just across a stretch of woods and upon a high hill, he could make out the dim outlines of a large house. A light shone forth from it. He knew that was "Carroll Place."

Tom gazed intently at the light. Then he turned away. His face grew hot, and his eyelids smarted.

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Even if there were no azaleas, he would visit Carroll Place tonight.

"Come, Jack," he called, and the two started down the hill.

And now they had gone but a few feet when Jack, wiggling his course through the bushes, nosed into a bright square of moonlight. Tom was following when he stopped. The moon was shining on a mass of white stuff.

It was a patch of azaleas!

## IV

Angling out from the dark mass of stables, a cinder driveway wound through the iron gates and around to the broad, stone portico at the front of the Carroll house. The driveway was now shining dead black in the moonlight as Tom came to the top of the hill and started to cut his way across the light.

Jack was gone. Pawing the ground, the dog had growled and refused to budge when they had reached the bottom of Carroll hill. So Tom, the azaleas, a mass of soft pink and white, filling his arms, had come the rest of the way alone.

When he reached the windows, Tom found the shades up and, by a table, the lady sewing. Doris was there too; and she was playing with a kitten by the fireplace. Across from the lady, a fat, red-faced man read a newspaper. But Tom did not look at the man long; he turned to Mrs. Carroll. This time both hat and veil were gone, and her brown hair was

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parted, and fastened by a large comb: the dress was some dark stuff, but she was sewing on something white. As she worked, the reading light cast a warm glow upon her hands, and somehow they spoke to him, only Tom could not tell what they said. He hoped she would look towards the window but she was intent on her sewing. So he looked around the room: the piano and palms partially hid the book-lined walls except where a mirror above the mantel piece glimmered, and shone and reflected. The chairs looked big and cosy.

At length, glancing at a tiny gold clock before her, the lady put her sewing on the table, rose and spoke to the little girl. The child's face began to pucker; but the mother, going over to her, smiled, rubbed a hand over the yellow head, and kissed her. Then she took the child by the hand, and the two left the room.

Tom turned quickly away from the window. Sorting the azaleas, he walked around to the veranda. Up the big stone steps he tiptoed. He put his face to the azaleas; then he laid them down beside the heavy door. Perhaps she would come out and find them there. He hurried down the steps and out upon the cinder driveway.

The moon was still shining. Baby clouds, silver white and dark blue, were swimming past it. Suddenly Jack brushed against his leg. A loud voice cried to him to stop! But he started to run. The voice shouted again. Then there came a flash and the sharp report of a rifle.

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The commotion had somewhat subsided. Carroll, breathing heavily and wiping his face, was met by his wife at the foot of the porch.

"Tell me," she said, "what was the matter?"

"Chicken thieves; they're taking him to the barn," he panted. "Moorse said he saw him sneak off from the porch here on a lope, and shot."

"Is he hurt?" They were ascending the steps.

"I don't know, he was hit in the back; they took him to the barn; Bob's gone for Doc. Hello! what's this?" They had reached the door. Carroll cautiously kicked at a mass of white stuff. "What—flowers? How'd they get here?" He bent down and picked up a branch. "What do you call these things, anyway?" Mrs. Carroll took the flower.

"They are—azaleas." Then came a pause. "I'm going to the barn," she finished.

"Wait a minute," Carroll expostulated, but she was already gone.

The man again wiped his face; then he opened the door, and entered the house.

The azaleas, a mass of soft pink and white, lay heaped against the door.

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# The Midland Chronicle

Professor Louise Pound of the University of Nebraska contributes a valuable article on *British and American Pronunciation* to the June issue of *The School Review*. A technical subject is treated in a manner intelligible and interesting to the reader without special training, and a large amount of valuable information is presented.

*Dry Points*, a group of lyrics by Joseph Warren Beach, *Nightfall*, by Maurice Browne, and *Voyages I–IV*, by Douglas Goldring are particularly noteworthy contributions to the May *Poetry*. Ezra Pound continues his series, *The Renaissance*, with an article on the endowment of artists, and Miss Harriet Monroe, under the title, *Give Him Room*, comments on the appreciation of the public for the arts of music, painting, and sculpture as compared with its attitude toward poetry.

Just at present a wave of interest in the classical Noh drama of Japan is sweeping over the American literary world. It finds expression in the current issues of two middle western publications, the admirable quarterly, *The Drama*, published at Chicago under the direction of The Drama League of America, and Mr. Fowler's *Miscellany*, which has been mentioned in these columns before. Perhaps the most important contribution is that of Mr. Ezra Pound in his edition of Ernest Fenellosa's manuscripts, in the first mentioned periodical. The article on *The Noh Drama of Japan*, by Edgar R. Anthony, Jr., and Porter E. Sargent, in *The Miscellany*, and Miss Crawford's *The Classical Drama of Japan* in *The Drama* both present information concerning these interesting old plays.

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# The Midland

A MAGAZINE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

VOLUME I JULY, 1915 NUMBER 7


## July

By Mahlon Leonard Fisher

It *must* be summer: but of such a calm
Doth Winter weave his dream of cloaking snow.
Of attar'd airs that are, no air's ablow;
And yet from somewhere, as it were a balm,
Blows incense slowly. Slowly, like a psalm
Or slowly-said responses, slips the stream:
A slim and silvery minnow does it seem,
'Mid grasses gasping, in the Meadow's palm.
No bird need sing today, and no bird sings:
This stillness is enough: it is to me
The muted prelude to Eternity;
A summing-up of hushed and ended things;
The balancing of Nature's books, who creeps
Close to a stone, and in her own shade sleeps.

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## Salt Fork River Sketches

By Helen Heberling

### I

It is August, and the Salt Fork of the Arkansas twists, a yellow scar, across miles of dusty prairie. Beyond, the sandhills roll quivering, scalloped, blue silhouettes against the horizon. In the alfalfa fields close to the river, heat-waves shiver and dance. There is no water in the Salt Fork. From the high cotton-woods on one bank, to the parched and fired prairie grass struggling through the sand on the other, the bed of the stream is dry, except where little puddles of muddy water seep up around a rotting log or a bridge pier. Salt glistens, white and green, on the yellow sandbars and against the red clay banks. A hot wind, blowing from the south, tears dead leaves from the corn stalks, and twists the dry quicksand into spirals and veils that shimmer and dance and die away. The sun blisters on the sand; the sand radiates back, hot, dry, suffocating. The face of the whole prairie is wrinkled and cut,—dried up with wind and sun.

A big Cadillac car ploughs up the approach to the bridge, shoots out across the long, rattling structure, then skids and flounders hub-deep in the sand on the other side.

### II

It is March on the Salt Fork of the Arkansas. The snows in the mountains have melted, and the river is a torrent, a mile and a half wide, muddy, frothy, seething with fence posts and tree trunks and

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last year's cornstalks. The sky is gray and low, the air is full of the smell of sodden earth and crushed green plants. About half way out in the flood stands a long, wooden bridge, cut off from land at both ends, with the water foaming under its handrails. A road twists across the prairie from the north and starts to run out to the bridge. It dips down a bank, and is swallowed up in a mile of churning backwater. Here, the water swirls and laps in an eddy, casting up straw and sticks and young corn plants, draggled into mere green strings, only to lick them back and cast them up again. A crowd of people stand in the road, watching the flood, quietly, excitedly, anxiously. A man in an overcoat and rubber boots stoops down to squint at a piece of board that sticks up out of the water a little way from the edge.

"She's only raised six inches in the last thirty minutes. Guess she ought to be going down in an hour or two."

A tall, very thin man with lines about his eyes, bends over to look at the stick, and straightens up again.

"If she raises another foot, those hay-stacks of mine over there will go."

He nods upstream. A quarter of a mile out, on a knoll, stand three big alfalfa stacks. The water sucks about their bases. Already, wisps and sodden bunches of hay from them are being cast up with the other straws and sticks in the road. The crowd moves uneasily. More and more of the hay is com-

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ing in, bringing with it the slight, sweet smell of alfalfa and the heavy, pungent odor of rotting vegetable matter. The people in the road are quiet; when they do speak, their voices sound strained and high against the roar of the flood and the steady lap-lapping of the backwater. A cow bawls and bawls from another sand hill near the hay-stacks. Her calf answers her shrilly from the bank. She plunges back and forth for a moment, the water swishing along her sides, then throws back her head and, bawling continuously, rushes into the water. At first, she makes some progress, then the current catches her and swings her out toward midstream, still bawling.

A low, grinding boom rises above the general roar; the center span of the bridge heaves, its handrails rise in the air; one end swings away from the rest of the bridge; then the whole span tears free and is pulled into the current, breaking up as it goes. There are a few quick cries from the women, and short, exclamatory oaths from the men. Suddenly, a child grasps its mother's skirts and screams, "Look, look!" and everyone turns to follow its pointing finger. Upstream, against a woven-wire fence that has held, lies a great mass of sodden, black alfalfa hay. All three stacks are gone.

## III

It is June on the Salt Fork of the Arkansas, and harvest time, and the sun shines hot at noon. Between the river and the dim, blue sand-hills, the

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alfalfa fields are seas of purple bloom. The river runs quietly over its jutting sandbars, and salt glistens, white and green, against its red clay banks. Along the road that twists across the prairie to the bridge, stretch fields of yellow wheat stubble. Hayracks, alternately crawling and stopping and crawling again, as they are loaded, work their way across them to the machines. Wagons back under the belching chutes of the separators, are filled, and crawl off across the stubble and the moist pastures to the barns. A lazy, vibrating heat steeps the prairies. Bumblebees buzz and circle and dip above the wild poppies and sensitive roses along the road. Crickets and grasshoppers drone monotonously from the bunch grass and smartweed thickets. A silver mirage dances above the sand hills. The mulberry trees in the hedges drop heavy, staining berries into the grass underneath. Puffy, white clouds float in a sky as blue as turquoise. In the sand along the river banks, the sand-plum bushes are breaking full of red, acid plums that drop off and fall among the sand stars and daisies and sand-burrs. A soft, south breeze rifts the curtain of steamy heat that blankets the prairie, and lets through all the smells of summer time; the air is sweet and heavy with the smell of curing crops, and fresh, new flowers, and growing corn, and over-ripe fruit. A buzzard drifts into the high, blue sky from the west, floats and drifts, drops, circles, rises, turns westward again, and floats and drifts out over the dim, blue sand hills.

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## IV

It is June on the Salt Fork, and the harvest moon swims above the prairies and the river, flooding the near places with yellow light, and darkening the far, blurred distances. The wide, low-banked river slips out of the blackness of one indistinct horizon, and fades into the shadows of the other, dull at either end, but glimmering and quivering under the moon. The water shimmers into the shadows of the bridge, darkens there, splits against a pier, gurgles past, and shimmers on again. Where the moonlight strikes slantwise on a bank or on a sandy beach, salt glistens like cut steel; and the cotton-woods and pecans along the banks scatter long, breeze-blown shadows over the wild plum-bushes below. The moon swings under a cloud, taking with it the shimmer from the water and the glitter from the salt crystals. A puff of wind ripples the low, black fields; the whole valley fills with the heavy, sweetly-illusive smell of alfalfa. A coyote howls from a cornfield, barks uneasily, howls again. A prairie dog yip-yips in sharp staccato. Then the breeze passes, and the moon slips away from the cloud. The water lightens, brightens, shimmers, again; the salt crystals shoot sparks of fire; and the cotton-woods and pecans along the banks scatter long, breeze-blown shadows over the wild plum bushes.

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## An Indian Love Song

By Willard Wattles

*I have seen him in the firelight when he stepped*
*from out the forest*
*And he stood before my father with the flames*
*upon his face,*
*Straight and tall and feather-footed and a quiver*
*o'er his shoulder*
*And my heart leaped in the shadows for the fire*
*of his embrace.*

I have seen her in the starlight when the lonely owl
was calling
And the ripples of the quiet pool threw twilight at
her feet,
Like the night her hair was falling and I saw her
body gleaming
As she poised above the waters like a swallow
dusk and fleet.

*I have seen him at the hunting when he knew not I*
*was watching*
*And he ran before the others like the sun before*
*the stars*
*And his arrow found its quarry and he stripped*
*the shining deer-skin*
*And I saw upon his glowing arms a hundred*
*whitened scars.*

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I have seen her at the grinding when the corn was on the mortar
And the little smoky baking fire went drifting up so white,
And her hands were swift and knowing as she knelt upon the hemlocks,
The song she sang was comforting, and oh, her eyes were bright.

*I will rise and bind my forehead with a band of beaded doe-skin,*
*I will wind the porcupine's sharp quills within my loosened hair,*
*And on my feet the moccasins my mother measured for me,*
*Then sleep, but first to Manitou make offerings of prayer.*

I have pulled the shining water-reeds and shaped them unto music,
I will stand before her wigwam when the evening-star is low,
She shall hear the haunting whip-poor-will and hearken to his calling
In the twilight for his mate to nest where quiet waters flow.

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*I have heard a sound of silver, it has crept behind the curtains*
*And the embers at the doorway fade, I fear them not at all.*
*There's a shadow at the water's edge has waited since the sunset,*
*A shadow at the water's edge, and shadowy his call.*

She is coming nearer, nearer, and her feet are on the grasses,
Her face is like the cooling wind, her hand a petalled flower,
Her breath is sweet with arbutus and lovely pink azalea-bloom,
And all the years are scattered smoke, but deathless is this hour.

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## Roads—Past, Present, and To Come

By Louise V. M. Hopkins

A cursory glance at the road lore of the past brings out the fact that, as a nation, the United States of America is very young indeed. Far in the "dark backward and abysm of time," almost before the dawn of history, Carthage, the great trading nation of the ancient world, was building splendid roads for commercial and military purposes throughout her domain. And history makes mention of

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three great highways as having extended out from ancient Babylon. Unfortunately the records fail to tell in what directions these roads extended, but fancy instantly pictures one of them as leading eastward toward the older civilizations of Persia and India, another westward toward the turbulent cities of Jerusalem and northern Egypt, and perhaps a third great highway led northward along the Euphrates toward Asia Minor and the Greek settlements on the shores of the Mediterranean. Doubtless the great Babylonian monarch, Nebuchadnezzar, in intervals between attacks of insanity and the building of wonderful hanging gardens, drove his war chariots and led his victorious armies over these royal roads on the business of his empire.

But the greatest road-builders of ancient times were the Romans. Three hundred and twelve years before the birth of Christ, Appius Claudius, a Roman senator, began the construction of a military road from Rome to a point not far from the present town of Capua. Later this road was extended to Brundusium. The bones of Appius Claudius have been dust for more than two thousand years, but the road which bears his name and which he built, the historic Appian Way, is still in existence.

The Appian Way is the earliest permanent piece of road construction of which we have any authentic record. Some of the stones which were laid in place by unknown workmen more than two thousand years ago may still be seen in the bed of this Roman road.

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Think of the great ones of the earth whose feet have almost certainly trod the worn surface of these stones: the apostles, Peter and Paul, Julius Caesar, Pompey, Michael Angelo, Dante, Charlemagne, Napoleon.

The civilized world was at one time controlled by a network of Roman roads, built with the sole purpose of moving troops and military equipment swiftly from one point of the empire to another. The nations which have ruled the earth have been nations of road-builders.

Following closely upon the heels of empire, supremacy in road building passed from Rome to France, thence to England, and finally at the present day the movement has crossed the Atlantic and reached the United States, and the country at large is thoroughly aroused to the importance of a highly developed system of public highways. If the awakening has been slow, it must be remembered that during the long march of the ages America lay in the western ocean, unknown and undreamed-of, waiting to be discovered, and that while dynasties were using their great highways to drive each other up and down the continents of the old world, the aborigines and early settlers of America were still using the runs of wild animals and the trails made by Indians as their sole means of communication.

Until a quarter of a century ago a recognized system of highway construction and improvement was unknown in the United States. Previous to that time

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a few toll roads were the only examples of an advance toward a good-roads movement.

The earliest account which we have of a toll road in the United States is dated 1796. This was one hundred and eighteen years ago; not long as time runs. Perhaps when a few more years have passed, say a thousand or so, we too shall have a historic highway to our credit.

This toll road extended from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to Philadelphia, a distance of sixty-six miles. It was built by a chartered company, and was looked upon as a model of its kind. It was composed of stones of various sizes, rolled together at haphazard, and the interstices filled with sand or dirt. In wet seasons this road was not only disagreeable but dangerous to travel.

Another famous toll road, built wholly or in part before 1800, was the historic highway known as the "Wilderness Road." It extended from the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia westward to Kentucky. This road was the chief artery of communication between the Atlantic seaboard and the frontier settlements during the closing years of the eighteenth century. Men and women still in the prime of life can distinctly recall hearing their parents tell of the wonderful adventures incident to a journey over this road. Perhaps it was a brave little bride, riding proudly on a pillion behind her stalwart young husband, who thus faced the perils of the frontier; or a clear-eyed, resolute head of a large family, seeking

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larger opportunities for his sturdy sons and daughters in the golden West; or perchance, a solitary adventurer tasting the romance of the wilderness. The Wilderness Road was built by the Wilderness Turnpike Company, and as late as 1895 was said to be owned by it.

Many attempts were made in the early days of the country to obtain aid in road construction from the national government, but without much success. The only such work of importance, if not the sole example, was the so-called "National Road," commonly known as the "Cumberland Road." It extended from Cumberland, Maryland, to Vandalia, Illinois. It was eighty feet wide, and was macadamized to a width of thirty feet. A great deal of labor and money was expended upon this road without appreciable returns.

Throughout the watershed of the Mississippi River, corduroy or log-faced roads were built where cheapness was a factor, and later, when saw-mills were introduced, plank roads came into common use. And as the frontier was pushed westward the splendid prairie roads of Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and the Dakotas became familiar to travelers. These beautiful prairie roads knew no section lines; they angled across the country from one remote army post to another, from trading post to lonely cabin, following always the line of least resistance, unobstructed by fences, picking up the faint trails made by the moc-

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casined feet of Indians, fording streams, and leading fearlessly on to uncharted regions beyond.

In the late fifties the era of the railroad began, and for a quarter of a century vehicular road-building was practically at a standstill. This was that memorable period when people "worked out" their road tax; that is, the farmer sent his hired man abroad equipped with a team of horses, a plow and a scraper to work his own sweet will on some section of the public highway. And for six months thereafter that spot was a place to be avoided.

But with the advent of the automobile, country highway development came again into prominence, and a thorough and systematic method of road construction and improvement is now being pushed rapidly forward in all parts of the country. Indeed, so wide-spread is the interest and enthusiasm, and so swift the movement, that what is good-roads news today is apt to be ancient history tomorrow.

New Jersey was the first state to inaugurate a good-roads propaganda. Early in its history laws were passed which placed the construction, improvement, and general oversight of its highways in the hands of competent engineers aided by state funds. Other states have now followed the example set by New Jersey, and most of them have laws providing for the construction and maintenance of country roads.

The most noteworthy and ambitious effort at road-building of modern times is the great ocean-to-ocean

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route, now in active process of construction, known as the "Lincoln Highway." This road, as every one knows, extends across the continent from east to west. It is three thousand miles in length. Its eastern terminal is New York City, its western is San Francisco.

The name of the road is a tribute to the memory of Abraham Lincoln. This designation was a happy inspiration on the part of the men who originated and worked out the idea of the highway, and there is not a shadow of doubt but that Lincoln himself would infinitely prefer a memorial of this kind to the tallest shaft of marble or bronze, or the most ornate mausoleum that was ever erected and dedicated to the glory of man. No niche or tablet in any hall of fame sacred to the memory of the great ones of the earth can compare with this tribute. The Highway is distinctively a people's road; it is being built by the people; it belongs to the people,—the people whom Lincoln loved so well,—and it will be a safe and pleasant highway for their use in all the time to come.

It will be recalled that in his young manhood Lincoln practiced surveying, and no one could more appreciate the trials and difficulties which beset the pathway of an undertaking of this magnitude; and certainly no one could know better than he the urgent need of improved highways throughout the land. In the archives of Sangamon County, Illinois, there is a quaint record which states in the dry lan-

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guage in which such records are written, that Lincoln was allowed the sum of three dollars for a day's work in relocating a part of the road which extended from Sangamon to the town of Athens, and fifty cents for the making of a map of said road.

The Highway is now well along in process of construction, but years of labor and careful oversight will be required before it reaches the full measure of perfection which it will eventually attain. The Association which has the work in charge has made a great effort to have the road mapped and marked, and in condition for automobile travel to the Expositions at San Francisco and San Diego in the summer of the present year.

The building of this road is a stupendous undertaking, and one well worthy of the mettle of a nation which assumes and pushes to completion stupendous undertakings. The road crosses four great mountain ranges, spans most of the great rivers of the country, threads its way between the sky-scrapers of great cities, passes through regions of vast agricultural wealth, and traverses long stretches of arid plains. It starts at sea-level, climbs to an elevation of nine thousand feet in Wyoming, and descends to sea-level again at its western terminal. While not laid out on arbitrary lines, in the main the Highway is direct. It begins near the fortieth degree, north latitude, and ends between the thirty-fifth and fortieth degrees, north, reaching its farthest north at Rawlins, Wyoming, and its farthest south at San Francisco.

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It follows always the line of least resistance, and although designed primarily for automobile travel, other vehicles are by no means barred.

The Highway traverses twelve states—New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, and California. In each of these states the business of the Highway is placed in the hands of a special commissioner, or consul, who has charge of the interests of the road in his division, and who coöperates with state and county road officials in the advancement of the good-roads movement.

These commissioners serve without pay, and the work is arduous, exacting, and often accompanied by disagreeable incidents. For instance, rival towns along the proposed route have contended for the right to claim the Highway, and rival streets in the same town have waged long and bitter warfare over the distinction of claiming the road. But the work is going on, and all these retarding elements are gradually giving way before a genuine desire to get the best possible results in the least possible time. In many instances the name of the street which the Highway traverses in a town has been changed to some appropriate cognomen such as Lincoln Street, Lincoln Avenue or Lincoln Boulevard. Plans to beautify the route by a system of tree planting have been proposed in some of the prairie states. The eastern section of the Highway, from New York City to Omaha, is further advanced in point of construc-

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tion than the western division. The most expensive section is said to be in New Jersey, from Jersey City to Newark, which cost a million and a half dollars, the bridges alone calling for an expenditure of five hundred thousand dollars.

The states of Indiana and Illinois have, from the first inception of the idea, manifested a most praiseworthy and patriotic pride in their divisions of the road. Citizens of Indiana are considering the plan of erecting beautiful arches bearing tablets upon which may be inscribed the names of citizens who have contributed funds toward the building of the Highway. And Illinois, as Lincoln's home state, is taking a lively interest in the matter. Indeed, a movement of this character appeals strongly to people of all classes in every part of the country. It grips the imagination; it goes beyond commercialism, and appeals to the love of conquest, which underlies the character of every American. As for the practical side of the venture, any one who has been far from home in an automobile, or in fact in any kind of conveyance, will readily appreciate the advantages of a well-built, plainly marked road.

The Lincoln Highway spans a continent; it binds together with a thread, slender it is true, but strong and resilient as a silver cord, the Puritan traditions of the Atlantic coast with the Orient-tinged splendor of the Pacific coast, the New England meeting house with the old Mission churches of the California coastline. It has no great commercial significance like the

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overland railway lines, no colonization project demands its aid, and it has no military significance like the roads of the old world, although it will be readily perceived that it might have tremendous military possibilities. No, our Highway is just a good, friendly, get-acquainted-with-your-country road, for the good pleasure of every one of us.

What is a road, anyway? To some prosaic souls it is nothing more than a passage-way from one point to another. But to those gifted with even a small amount of imagination, a road means vastly more. It is the history of a community epitomized. It is a record, step by step, of the development of a people from savagery to civilization. Every road, from the scarcely legible Indian trail creeping from ledge to ledge of a mountain pass, to the velvet pavement of the fairest city street, tells a story of its own to those who care to read and understand.

In time the Highway will be paved with some permanent material throughout its entire three thousand miles, but for the present the greater part of it outside the cities will consist of the ordinary dirt roads of the open country. With modern methods of road construction, however, and the knowledge, now generally diffused, that the fundamental principles of road-making are drainage and compaction,—the first obtained by improved methods of grading, and the second by frequent dragging,—no special difficulties are to be anticipated from dirt roads. In fact, negligence in road matters is now regarded

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with such disfavor by the traveling public that few communities have the courage to hold out against the prevailing demand for improvement. The bad roads of the past were due in a great measure to ignorance, but the lectures and demonstrations of highway specialists throughout the country are rapidly enlightening the people on good-roads matters, and improved conditions are sure to result from this teaching. As a result of the good-roads crusade many communities are employing competent engineers to work out the problem of better highways.

In the main the Highway follows very closely the early trade routes of the country. West of Chicago it follows almost without deviation the route of the historic Overland Trail. For this reason it does not always strike the larger cities. To obviate the possible objection to this feature, a system of marking is being devised which will enable the traveler to depart from and regain the main route at pleasure without risk of losing his way. For instance, few people would care to make the cross-country tour and not visit the beautiful city of Denver. Denver is a good half day's run to the south of Cheyenne, the nearest point on the Highway. But at Big Springs, a station near the Nebraska-Colorado line, a branch road leaves the main route and leads over good roads to Denver. From Denver this branch road runs northward along the eastern base of the Medicine Bow range of mountains and rejoins the main route at Cheyenne.

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The national colors, red, white and blue, have been adopted as the sign of the Highway. A band of red at the top, a band of blue at the bottom, and between, a broad space of white. In the centre of the white section is a large L, and above and below the L are printed in small type the words, "Lincoln Highway." This makes an attractive, conspicuous, and patriotic marker for the road. It can be seen and read from a long distance, an attribute which will be appreciated by persons who have often been puzzled or led astray by sale notices, advertisements and bills of various kinds, from which the usual white, weather-worn road marker is quite indistinguishable.

The Lincoln Highway, when it reaches the full measure of its promise, will be the last word in road-building. It has the utilitarian value of filling an actual need of the times, and it has the unqualified support of a people who know what they want, who are in the habit of getting it, and who are willing to pay the price.

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## The "Spoon River Anthology"

By John T. Frederick

Beginning May 29, 1914, there appeared in *Reedy's Mirror,* a weekly magazine published in St. Louis, a series of short poems by Edgar Lee Masters. These have now been collected and reprinted in book form as the *Spoon River Anthology* (The Macmillan Co., New York, $1.25 net). They are self-portraits, self-analyses, self-written epitaphs of the dead of a little southern Illinois village, as they lie in their graves "on the hill." Each poem describes a crisis, sums up a personality, expresses the ultimate question or conclusion of a life.

The reader who knows Middle Western folk recognizes from the outset the essential truth of these pictures. They are real people who are here looking back on their lives and letting us see with their eyes —people with whom we may have rubbed shoulders while they were alive, and whose kind we are meeting and dealing with daily. The *Spoon River Anthology* is a work of fact, whatever else it may be.

More than that, we feel as we advance that Mr. Masters knows not only the life of individuals, but of the community as well. The complex relations of men and women, the delicate reactions of personalities, expressed or suggested, are portrayed with complete truth. Some readers will be disposed at first to agree with the critic who accuses Mr. Masters of describing a place "peculiarly accursed," fur-

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nishing an "extraordinary study in mortuary statistics." But such criticism indicates either failure to grasp the work as a whole, or lack of thorough consideration of the subject matter. It would be an exceptional Illinois or Iowa town which would not furnish in a like period of time a larger proportion of suicides, murders, and accidental deaths than the twenty-odd out of over two hundred cases presented in the *Anthology*. If Mr. Masters has erred at all, it is not in over-emphasis of the sordid and unworthy sides of life, but rather in over-idealization, over-spiritualization, of his people. And yet the deepest experience indicates that he has made no mistake, even in this. There are big, silent men in the country who have thought like Davis Matlock:

"Well, I say to live it out like a god
Sure of immortal life, though you are in doubt,
Is the way to live it.
If that doesn't make God proud of you
Then God is nothing but gravitation,
Or sleep is the golden goal."

There are tradesmen who have seen the inner significance of their daily task, like Griffy the Cooper:

"You are submerged in the tub of yourself—
Taboos and rules and appearances,
Are the staves of your tub.
Break them and dispel the witchcraft
Of thinking your tub is life!
And that you know life!"

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The trouble is that in the everyday relations of existence these things are hidden. They are not revealed on first acquaintance. We need sympathy and insight like that of Mr. Masters; and then we can learn these humble, true philosophies from the lips of living men, as he must have done.

The form of the *Anthology* might furnish ground for prolonged discussion, as it opens the whole question of the definition of poetry. Non-metrical it certainly is; yet many of us prefer to call it poetry, not wishing to deny that term to our King James version of the Book of Job, or to "When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed." As free verse, it belongs rather to the pure succession of Whitman than with the sickening puerilities of most of our self-styled modernists. Few will deny, moreover, that the form is the only possible one for a work combining so great inclusiveness with such minute individualization. So many characters could only be presented, in fiction treatment, in many volumes. And even then the inevitable subordination to plot would make the effect which Mr. Masters obtains impossible. In the *Anthology* we become acquainted with men and women very much as we do in real life,—individually, disparately, with only secondary relations to each other—much more so than in the novel. The perfect flexibility of the free verse admits of adaptation to every shading of character and temperament. It can chatter and rattle most commonly for Dorcas Gustine:

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"I was not beloved of the villagers,
But all because I spoke my mind,
And met those who transgressed against me
With plain remonstrance, hiding nor nurturing
Nor secret griefs nor grudges. . . .
The tongue may be an unruly member—
But silence poisons the soul.
Berate me who will—I am content."

It can speak with matter-of-fact directness, tragic in its clearness, for Cooney Potter:

"I inherited forty acres from my Father
And, by working my wife, my two sons and two daughters
From dawn to dusk, I acquired
A thousand acres. But not content,
Wishing to own two thousand acres,
I bustled through the years with axe and plow,
Toiling, denying myself, my wife, my sons, my daughters.
Squire Higbee wrongs me to say
That I died from smoking Red Eagle cigars.
Eating hot pie and gulping coffee
During the scorching hours of harvest time
Brought me here ere I had reached my sixtieth year."

But the verse can also rise to profound and impressive dignity for William H. Herndon:

"There by the window in the old house
Perched on the bluff, overlooking miles of valley,

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My days of labor closed, sitting out life's decline,
Day by day did I look in my memory,
As one who gazes in an enchantress' crystal globe,
And I saw the figures of the past,
As if in a pageant glassed by a shining dream,
Move through the incredible sphere of time."

And most readers will feel the lift of sheer poetry in such lines as those for Hare Drummer:

"Do the boys and girls still go to Siever's
For cider, after school, in late September?
Or gather hazel nuts among the thickets
On Aaron Hatfield's farm when the frosts begin?
For many times with the laughing girls and boys
Played I along the road and over the hills
When the sun was low and the air was cool,
Stopping to club the walnut tree
Standing leafless against a flaming west.
Now, the smell of the autumn smoke,
And the dropping acorns,
And the echoes about the vales
Bring dreams of life. They hover over me.
They question me:
Where are those laughing comrades?
How many are with me, how many
In the old orchards along the way to Siever's,
And in the woods that overlook
The quiet water?"

It is in the general tone of the work, however, its

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conception and dominating motive, that the author has shown not merely talent or forcefulness, but the deeper powers that produce great literature. He has not only placed in lasting literary form the whole life of a typical community of our region, and thereby made himself the first great poet of the Middle West. He has produced a *Comedie Humaine* in miniature, an inclusive, detailed picture of all humanity. He has not failed to portray the evil with the good; he believes with Seth Compton, who built up the circulating library for Spoon River,

"That no one knows what is good
Who knows not what is evil;
And no one knows what is true
Who knows not what is false."

There are many lives presented here which are sordid and ugly and hopeless. But none the less, the work is the work of an idealist. Still and hot at the heart of it burns a great belief in men, in their ultimate beauty and goodness and strength, in the truth which is life. Unlike his Petit the Poet, Edgar Lee Masters has not failed to see

"Life all around me here in the village:
Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth,
Courage, constancy, heroism, failure."

He has not failed to hear

"While Homer and Whitman roared in the pines."

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# The Midland Library

S. H. M. Byers, Civil War veteran and Iowa's popular poet, has entered a new field in his latest publication, *The Bells of Capistrano,* from the press of the Grafton Publishing Corporation, Los Angeles. It is a charming verse tale, the scenes of which are laid in an old California mission. An attractive binding and many full page engravings make the work a desirable possession for the bibliophile.

Two new biographies of Ulysses S. Grant have recently appeared from Philadelphia publishing houses: *The True Ulysses S. Grant,* by General Charles King (J. B. Lippincott Co., $2.00 net); and *Ulysses S. Grant,* by Franklin S. Edmonds (Geo. W. Jacobs and Co., $1.25 net). These volumes are of especial interest to Middle Western readers because of the great general's connection with the region. Both are readable and authoritative, and will no doubt meet a real demand. General King's book contains many minute details as to Grant's associates at West Point and in the Mexican War, as well as in the various stages of the Civil War. Certain traits of Grant's character and certain of his attainments are dwelt upon perhaps unduly, and the narrative is not entirely free from digressions. The format of this volume is highly attractive and satisfactory, and it is admirably illustrated with twenty-four plates. The work of Mr. Edmonds is published in less attractive form, but constitutes a most interesting and serviceable biography. The author's style, though not brilliant, is sympathetic and

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adequate. The index and appendices in this volume will be of service to the student as well as the general reader.

Finished literary craftsmanship, lyric charm, and intense realism are all contained in Arthur Davison Ficke's recent volume, *The Man on the Hilltop,* published by Mitchell Kennerley. The title poem and the one following, *At St. Stephanos,* voice earnest outcries against tragic enigmas of life. The "man on the hilltop," revolting blindly against the terrors of industrial oppression, and Theodorus, longing for life and finding it not in the cloister, are companion portraits, drawn with intellectual appreciation and human sympathy. Variety of mood and color permeate the lyrics in the second division of the volume. The *Portrait of an Old Woman* is almost revoltingly realistic; *A Very Old Spring Song* riots in the sensuous pleasures of life; *To a Child—Twenty Years Hence* is a beautiful and appealing expression of human affection; *Swinburne, an Elegy* is a sincere tribute to an artist of kindred soul. Among the *Grotesques*—the third group of the collection—there is subtle characterization, a sort of serious humor, and some tragedy and pathos. The poet sees whole life histories in the conventional scenes of a barroom (*In a Barroom*), and recognizes the hero in the suicide (*The Latest Believer*). In this volume Mr. Ficke reveals a comprehensive vision of humanity and a keen sense of the artistically fit. He may not, like Giovannitti, forge his work from the crucible of his own experiences, but his sympathetic understanding is no less evident and what he has to offer does not essentially lack in vitality and significance.

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# The Midland Chronicle

*Others,* the new magazine edited by Alfred Kreymborg and Walter Conrad Arensberg, is devoted to the interests of poetry. It is issued for the time being at Ridgefield, N. J.

The June number of *The Bookman* is one of unusual interest to the general reader. Among the important articles it contains may be mentioned *What South Americans Read,* by Isaac Goldberg; *The Revival of Greek Tragedy in America,* by Harrison Smith; and *Some Recent Books About the Drama,* by Clayton Hamilton.

Bliss Carman appears in the June number of *Poetry* with two lyrics, *Lord of Morning* and *Noon,* both breathing the love of the out-of-doors and the *wanderlust* that we expect from this bard. Arthur Davison Ficke contributes a sequence of sonnets, *To Rupert Brooke.* One cannot miss the charm in the *Little Songs of the Forest,* by William Griffith, and the two *Sonnets,* by Georgia Wood Pangborn, nor fail to be moved by the vigor and richness in the *vers libre* pieces of the young Syrian, "Ajan Syrian," who makes his first public appearance as a poet.

The June number of *The Teepee Book,* the fresh and attractive little periodical published at Sheridan, Wyoming, by Herbert Coffeen, is devoted primarily to memories of Custer's last fight. An article entitled *The Custer Battle,* by Elbert Hubbard, gains added interest from the recent tragic death of that unique genius. *The Summer of '76,*

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by Mary Manly Parmelee, gives charmingly a child's view of the stirring events of the time. The number also contains a good short poem by Badger Clark, entitled *Awhile,* and some humorous verse.

*The Dial* for June 10 contains a noteworthy little article entitled *Justice for the Indian,* by Frederick Starr, formerly of Coe College and now of the University of Chicago. In reviewing Warren K. Moorehead's *The American Indian in the United States,* Professor Starr speaks with deep feeling of our national injustice and inefficiency in dealing with the Indians. The subject is one which challenges our attention. No thinking American can dismiss the matter carelessly when such an authority as Professor Starr reaches this conclusion: "As a people we claim to excel in honesty and in practical business sense. The condition of our Indians to-day gives the lie to both claims."

An exhibition of work of the artists of the North West and Middle West was held, May 1–9, at St. Paul, under the auspices of the St. Paul Institute, and has been established as a yearly event. Next year it will be held March 6–19, and thereafter may be shown in other cities of the region. The project was undertaken to bring about coöperation among artists and art lovers in this part of the country, and to arouse them to greater self-reliance. The decision to hold the exhibition was announced only two months before the event, but the response to the invitations sent out was prompt and generous. There were many entries, representing a wide geographical area, and possessing high average merit. A gold medal was awarded to Lee Woodward Ziegler of St. Paul, and silver medals to Donna Schuster of Howard Lake, Minnesota, Charles B. Keeler of Cedar Rap-

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ids, Iowa, and Herbert Strunk of Shakopee, Minnesota. A popular voting contest was held and was so successful that the committee was enabled to buy the four most popular pictures: *Hills of the Little Iowa,* by N. R. Brewer of St. Paul; *Winter Morning,* by Robert F. Gilder of Omaha; *Moonlight,* by Charles B. Keeler of Cedar Rapids; and *The Lone Pine,* by George Raab of Milwaukee. It is to be hoped that this successful exhibition, expressing as it does the growing spirit of independence in Middle Western art and letters, may become permanent, and may find emulation in other cities of the region.

Two features in late numbers of *The Bellman* are reminiscent of former European conflicts. *The American Minister During the Siege of Paris,* by Elizabeth Washburn, a two part article in the May 29 and June 5 numbers, relates the experiences of Elihu B. Washburne, minister to France at the time of the Franco-Prussian war. In the issue of June 19 appears a group of three sketches commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the battle of Waterloo: *The Hero of Waterloo,* by Alice J. Whitmore; *One Hundred Years Ago,* by Henry Adams Bellows; and *The Field of Waterloo,* by Elizabeth Yardley. Montrose J. Moses, in *Euripides the Modern,* and Richard Burton, in *The Greeks,* discuss problems pertaining to the staging of Greek plays under modern conditions (June 12).

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# The Midland

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## Amana the Church and Christian Metz the Prophet

By Mrs. B. F. Shambaugh

To the casual visitor Amana is simply a group of seven old-fashioned villages, picturesquely located in the valley of the Iowa River and surprisingly prosperous for a community which is apparently so "behind the times". To the student of social philosophy it is known as the most successful experiment in communism in the United States—the nearest approach in our day to the Utopian's dream of a community of men and women living together in peace, plenty, and happiness, away from the world and its many distractions. To the business world it is a thriving manufacturing center in the Middle West, best known for its woolen mills and its calico printing works.

To the villagers themselves with their aversion to mixing "philosophy and human science with divine wisdom", Amana with its villages and vineyards, its gardens and orchards, its mills and factories, its twenty-six thousand goodly acres, and its eighteen hundred members is the visible expression of the Lord's will—"the blessed continuation of God's

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mercy". The establishment of its seven villages, the growth and development of its varied industries, the success of its system of communism, all these are incidental to the life and thought of the Community: its chief concern is spiritual. Born of religious enthusiasm and disciplined by persecution, it has ever remained primarily a Church. And so the *real* Amana is Amana the Church—Amana the Community of True Inspiration.

As a religious movement the Community of True Inspiration traces its origin to the German Mystics and Pietists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its rise was one of the numerous protests against the dogmatism and formality that had grown up in the Lutheran Church. As a distinct religious sect the Community dates from the year 1714 with the writing and teachings of Eberhard Ludwig Gruber and Johann Friedrich Rock, who are regarded as its real founders. Together these "heroes of faith" formulated and improved the doctrines of the early Mystics and Pietists—particularly of that little branch of the Pietists which arose during the last quarters of the seventeenth century and whose followers are said to have "prophesied like the prophets of old" and were called "Inspirationists".

Gruber and Rock believed profoundly in the inspiration of the Bible; but they also believed in present day inspiration. "Does not the same God live today", they argued, "and is it not reasonable to believe that He will inspire His followers now as

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then? There is no reason to believe that God has in any way changed His methods of communication, and as He revealed hidden things through visions, dreams, and by revelations in olden times He will lead His people today by the words of His Inspiration if they but listen to His voice."

In the Community of True Inspiration as founded by Gruber and Rock, divine guidance came through individuals who were regarded as especially endowed by the Lord with the "miraculous gift of Inspiration". Through these instruments or *Werkzeuge* the Lord testified and spoke directly to His children as He spoke to the children of Zion through the prophets of Israel. The *Werkzeug* was "solely a passive instrument in the hands of the Lord." This is still the unique fundamental doctrine of the Community, although there has been no *Werkzeug* among the Inspirationists for thirty years.

From the time of Rock and Gruber the *Werkzeug* has usually been accompanied by an especially appointed Scribe who faithfully recorded "from day to day in weal or woe" all that was said by the *Werkzeug* while under the influence of the Spirit of Inspiration. There are preserved in the archives of the Community thousands of pages of these recorded testimonies in manuscript. From the beginning collections of these testimonies have been made according to "the dictation of the Lord and the decision of the Brethren" and published in volumes of convenient size and distributed among the faithful.

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They are regarded as of equal authority and of almost equal importance with the Bible. And the reading of these testimonies, old and new, has always been a part of the religious services of the Community.

Since the Inspirationists believe that the Lord has ever revealed His will directly to them and "gives today as He did yesterday, the same assurance through which the prophets and apostles were certain that the Spirit of God spoke through them and urged them on", a rigid orthodox creed would be contrary to the theory and spirit of True Inspiration. "I will reveal myself ever more powerfully, holier, and more glorious in and among you", reads an early promise of the Lord, "as long as you will bring forth to meet me the honest and sincere powers of your will." To keep this covenant "faithfully and sacredly" has been of more consequence to the Community than the formulation of a church creed.

Such is the simple faith of Amana the Church—the faith that sustained the Community through years of persecution and trial in the Old World and through years of suffering and sacrifice in the establishment of "a dwelling in the wilderness where there was none" in the New World—the faith that has kept the Community clean and fine through prosperity as well as adversity and has made Amana unique in the history of communism.

The Community of True Inspiration has had many a "well founded Brother" who has given to it the

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impulse of his personality. Many good Brothers have given to the service, at critical times, freely of their means, of their business insight and experience, and of the labor of their hands; but it is to the religious genius and practical organizing statesmanship of Christian Metz, "the highly endowed and specially favored *Werkzeug* of the Lord", that the Community owes its greatest debt. Christian Metz was without question the most remarkable personage ever connected with the Community. He became "prepared for the service of the Lord and the Community" in Germany during the "Reawakening"—the historic revival of the Community in 1817. He was "recalled from the field of his endeavor" in 1867, six years after the establishment of the last of the seven Iowa villages. During this half century Christian Metz was not only the spiritual head of the Community but, as his faithful Scribe relates after his death, "in the whole external and internal leadership of the Community the *Werkzeug* had to bear the bulk of the burden and care." And the records show clearly that throughout these eventful years his phenomenal gift of organization was always abreast his religious enthusiasm.

It was Christian Metz who first conceived the idea of leasing estates in common in Germany as a refuge for the faithful; and while the original intention had been to live together simply as a Christian congregation or church, Christian Metz foresaw that a system of communism would be the natural develop-

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ment of the mode of life which these people had been forced to adopt. And in the very beginnings of their life in common on these old German estates Christian Metz foresaw that exorbitant rents and unfriendly governments would one day make it necessary to find a home in the New World "where they and their children could live in peace and liberty".

Some years ago I looked out over these old German estates from the ruined tower of Ronneburg castle. This imposing old castle—the home of the "old defenders of the faith"—commands a view of the country for many, many miles. The friendly keeper called my attention to eleven *Dorfen* in the distance, and apologized for a gathering rain which obscured "oh so many more". Then he pointed with pride into a mass of clouds where "one could see Frankfurt on a clear day with a field glass". But I seemed only to see beyond the mist the beautiful Amana of to-day with its villages and vineyards, its gardens and orchards, its fields and pastures and meadows "where all that believed were together and had all things in common"; and I seemed only to hear in the rising wind the hum of Amana's varied industries "where each was given an opportunity to earn his living according to his calling or inclination". My thoughts were of Christian Metz, the young carpenter "who kept these things in his heart and pondered them over". And I felt the solemn gladness that "God in His great mercy" had grant-

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ed to his gifted *Werkzeug* years enough to witness the fulfillment of "His gracious promise".

Sincerely and most devoutly do the Inspirationists believe that "in all these important undertakings and changes" the Lord "ordained and directed" everything through His *Werkzeug*. And of the sincerity of the work of Christian Metz there can be no doubt. His writings reveal the fact that he felt deeply the responsibility of his high office. He was constantly guarding against "subtle self love and one's own wisdom" and striving for "an absolute surrender and abandon to the fathomless abyss". To one of the Brethren, "a still living witness", he wrote regarding the proposed removal to America: "The strong God can do and bring about whatsoever He will; what is required in all weighty matters is complete submission to and faith in God."

From the year 1823 to the time of his death "a period of five times nine years" there came to the Community through Christian Metz three thousand six hundred and fifty-four testimonies, besides many beautiful "outpourings of the Spirit" in song and rhyme. These testimonies of Christian Metz vary in length from a few sentences to several hours in duration, and in content from admonitions to lead a holier life to explicit directions for carrying on the temporal affairs of the Community. But by far the larger number are of a high spiritual order and have a beauty and a majesty that make them worthy of a place among Inspired Literatures.

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Many of the finest of Amana's remarkable "Collection of Old and Newly Selected Spiritual Songs" were written by Christian Metz. Some of them reach a high plane of emotional exaltation and are used as prayers in the religious services of the Community. Others are written in the manner of the Psalms and are chanted by the congregation without instrumental accompaniment. It is a quaint and altogether charming blending of the Gregorian chant and the old Lutheran hymn tunes which is very inspiring. To the "worldly minded" the *Psalter-Spiel* of Amana, with its quickening melody and sweep of rhythm, with its exalted poetry and profound emotion, is of a distinctly higher order than the hymn book music ordinarily found in the churches of "the world".

Throughout his "fifty years of effort and labor" Christian Metz strove for simplicity and sincerity in religious expression. The Community was constantly admonished to eliminate all that is formal and bound to the letter. "True Christianity", he records in his *Tagebuch,* "will ever remain a secret to him who practices only the empty form. Genuine Christianity is so humble, so lowly, and so simple that the child's mind comprehends it."

Life was to Christian Metz "not a passive contemplation of great realities and ends", but a never ending battle against selfish and private purposes, spiritual apathy and indifference, temptations, offences and provocations, pride and vain glory, and human arbitrariness. "Be earnest and brave and be

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ever on your guard", was his warning to the Community. "Drive the enemy on all sides off the field and keep close watch that Satan be deprived of all advantage." He pleaded with a fine directness and dignity of speech for purity and honesty in thought and deed, for the prayerful spirit and the collected mind, for the spirit of humility and for selfless meditation, for a sincere spiritual striving and a consciousness of individual responsibility in the work of God's mercy, and for a complete surrender to the Good. All these were to Christian Metz as essential to life as pure water and fresh air and were quite within the possibility of human attainment. Such were in truth the purposes of the "earthly pilgrimage".

There is, to be sure, nothing startling or unique in the "chief essentials" of the doctrine of the Community of True Inspiration as revealed in the testimonies of her Inspired Prophets. It is, in the main, a doctrine as old as the world and as modern as the religious philosophy of the twentieth century. Each age has expressed it in its own idiom, but the "essence", as Christian would say, "is one and the same, eternal and everlasting."

It is Amana's living, working faith in its own ideals and its own destiny that is unusual. To be "a church always even in our every day life" is to be *different* in this age of business preoccupation and worldly prosperity. And in this difference lies the secret of Amana's serenity and its pervading atmosphere of peace.

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## The Venus of Milo

By Lewis Worthington Smith

This is the wonder of womanhood born of the sea,
Fresh from the wash of the waves. From a heart
pulsing free
Out of the thwartings of earth and her duller intents,
Here the sure hand carved the ultimate splendors of
sense.
Gods of the flesh and the spirit we shape as we may,
Out of the clouds or the flame or the wood or the clay,
Joy on their faces or writhings of hideous rage,
Power in majestic effulgence or wisdom of sage.
This was your glory, O sculptor, to find the flesh
sweet,
Bearing your spirit enfranchised on earth-treading
feet.

There at your bench as you chiselled and threw the
chips by,
Yours was the problem eternal. The care of your
eye
Rounded the shoulders and breasts in a fullness of
life,
Glad of the raptures of sense. You were calm in the
strife
Waging forever to trouble the poise of the soul,
Swayed between use and abuse, between portion and
whole.

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This is the height of all being, to pluck the fair fruit,
Eat of its fairness and toss down the core to the brute.
Here you have fashioned us beauty, the dust made divine,
Grasped the great good, and its grossness known how to decline.

We are your kindred, O sculptor; the centuries lie
Dimly between us. The monk and the courtesan vie
Age after age, making life either desert or hell,
Tossing man now to his lusts and again to his cell.
Only to-day once again have our spirits laughed free,
Only to-day have our eyes grown full-visioned to see
Beauty and good in the shapelessness hewn out of earth,
Breaking with hands of sure wisdom its dross from its worth.
Here you have shown us in marble how flesh may be fine,
Freed from all prurient passions, yet eager as wine.

Buried at Milo! The world turned to chaos again,
Waiting the hour when your soul could rekindle in men.
Thousands of years wrought their changes before we could stand
Mate of the strength and the fullness here born from your hand.

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Now, O my sculptor, the greatness and poise of your art
Live once again in a world with a heart like your heart.
Steady of hand, clear of eye, sure of choice, we at last
Walk through the ways of the world, free of soul in the vast,
Gods of the flesh with the instincts of earth like your own,
Chiselling beauty and life from the obdurate stone.

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## The Prairie

By Walter J. Muilenburg

The prairie lay dreaming in the warmth of early summer. Level, monotonous, it stretched away until its green became drab in the far distance. It was alive, and yet lifeless; full of color, yet colorless; intangible mystery lurked in its contrast, a mystery of light and shadow and tints. Strange, dreaming, lovely, it lay beneath the intense, blue sky. Underfoot, the ground was bright with young grass and flowers, through which the light wind rippled soundlessly. It was only when earth and sky met and their colors merged that one caught a hint of the wild power of the prairie, its sweep, its changelessness, its passive cruelty and callousness.

But John Barrett and his wife, newly-married and filled with the sense of dominant power which ani-

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mate life feels over inanimate life, had thrown the challenge to the prairie. Even now, on that summer morning, their sod house stood out bravely in the silent sunshine. About it lay a wide circle of vivid green, half-grown crops of grain which were to supply the necessities of their pioneer life.

They had come from the East. The village where they were born had early labeled Barrett a "ne'er-do-well" and when he married Lizzie Delton it has passed final and irrevocable judgment on both. He was shiftless, a rolling stone, while she—oh, she was only one of the Deltons—a colorless, undersized woman with lack-lustre eyes.

After his sudden marriage, Barrett was seized again with the desire of change. His wife agreed, unquestioning, devoted as a faithful dog. Married life seemed stimulating to Barrett. They would emigrate into the prairie and win an easy life from the unplowed soil. His eyes glowed.

"Why, Lizzie, it'll be fine! Us, alone, out there together, a nice little house, farming on the side, we can raise some stock—it'll be great! And then, if we want to, we can always go to town for a visit and stock up."

"I guess it's all right, John—just as you say." Her face remained blank, but her hands clasped and unclasped almost eagerly.

Barrett was uplifted by her dependence, and an injured pride came into his voice, "We'll leave this little burg for good. They talk too dam' much

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about us. If we make good, they'd hate us; if we lose out, they'd laugh."

A week later they were on the way in an old, canvas-covered wagon. As they went out of civilization, the woman's face changed; a hint of color came into her cheeks and an occasional smile touched her face with a twisted beauty. Her husband felt her animation, her unfolding charms.

They reached the prairie in early spring. It invited them in its soft, wandering colors. The woman, as she breathed of the mellow air, heavy with the odor of earth, grew more alive; sometimes she laughed at her husband's dry humor. The prairie lay before them, unscarred by trails, and they rambled leisurely over the soft grass, finding a pleasant excitement in the fact that their home might be just past the next swell of ground. They were in no haste to find their home. To wander about the prairie was mysterious, romantic. The days were dreamily warm, the sky deep-blue, the meadowlark's song quivered continually; and, beyond this, was the lure of the tinted horizon, most mysterious when night came on. It came slowly always, the air dimmed and the immensity of the earth gained emphasis by sweeping breeze and by the twinkling vastness of the dark sky.

Late one afternoon they came to a small river. After camping there, they decided to make a home on its banks. A few days of hard work, the woman helping, and the sod house was complete. Next, they

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turned up the black prairie soil and sowed their grain. Everything promised success. Some impulse of life seemed to come to them from the depths of the earth. It was a paradise for the man and the woman.

"If it'll only last," she said, hesitatingly, one evening at supper.

The man laughed.

Then over the prairie two months passed. The softness of spring widened into the fiercer heat of summer. Not a drop of rain had fallen for two weeks; the man's face shadowed as he watched his crops. And slowly the heat became more intense. The man began to curse under his breath. Then, as the heat of mid-summer grew, the iron soul of the prairie bared itself to them. Grim, silent, it seemed waiting, with torturing patience, to achieve some master-stroke of tragedy. The man, longing for rain to save his crops, became morose with helpless anger. The crops withered slowly, drooping for the water which the soil could not give. Beauty brooded over the prairie. The sky was blue in the early morning, white at noon, and brilliant at sunset. But no clouds.

As time passed, a change came in the man and woman. They began to give themselves up to sudden heavy silences, their talk was listless; when they smiled there was no spontaneity. The grip of the prairie seemed to close upon their souls. During the day, the man worked with sullen determination.

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The woman remained indoors, hands often idle, eyes vacantly on the horizon. In the evening, after supper, they sat in front of the shack, facing the West, and watched the sun go down under the level line at the end of the world. It was then that the menace of the prairie stood out strongest. The last light was never a benediction, but always something ominous. Its beauty was savage, over-powering. There was nothing to hide the fierce, red light. The earth stretched, level and unmarked except for a single, twisted scrub oak, drying slowly by the dry creek bed—an empty horror of unobstructed space that grew indistinct in the red dimness of approaching darkness.

On one such night they had stayed outside longer than usual. The man sat, chin in hand, looking heavily at the ground. His wife, narrow shoulders drooping, inexpressibly weary, watched the dusk growing in the sky. Finally he rose as though to enter the house. She got up silently. He caught her outline against the pale light. How frail she was! Never strong, she seemed more delicate now than before. He stepped to her.

"Say, Lizzie, aint you gettin' tired of this? Le's go back?"

She did not answer for a moment. He could see her hands open and close slowly. Then she said, "No, not yet."

A moment of silence and she flamed in sudden fierceness, "I don't see why everything's against us

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so. Back East, people looked down on us. We wasn't respectable—I don't know why. Ever since I can remember, I had to work, work, work,—from morning 'till night. What did I ever get for it? People thought there was something wrong with me because I never dressed up like they did. Even my folks called me 'poor Lizzy.' An' when you come along, last spring, it was the only good time I ever had. But we'll never go back. We'll stay right here."

Barrett's face was grim at her unexpected outburst. He would not go back—and the injustice of it!

"It aint right," he broke out, suddenly, "it's dam' unfair!" His groan ended in a half-cry. The woman looked up at him, a look so full of desperate confidence, that he cursed again. She shivered. The evening breeze struck them coldly; they went inside.

In spite of his determination to remain, Barrett knew that they were in a desperate condition. Already he had to dig deep in the dry creek bed for water and they had exhausted one half of their second load of provisions. The horses, too, grew lean on the scant burned grass of the prairie. But they would have to face something worse than this before giving up!

The hot, dry weather continued. The sky was always bright. The crops lay dead on the fevered soil. All animal life, too, had vanished from the plains. One morning, the woman saw a crow flap-

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ping heavily toward the shack. She watched in hope to see the bird alight—there had been so many birds in the spring—but it wavered only a moment above her and then swept its low flight on toward the East. She looked at the gray universe about her and her face, also gray, hardened into quivering defiance. It seemed as if eternity lay about them; the past was dead, the future did not exist. They were living in an eternal present, a void that would endure forever. And always the heat, the quivering heat, and the gray menace of the horizon.

Summer merged into early autumn. The nights grew chilly, though the noon sun still burned. All the green life of the spring was yellow and dry as tinder. From sun-rising to sun-setting, the man and woman hardly spoke. Helpless, in the midst of a power before which their strength was nothing, they waited. Yet, dulled as they were, body and soul, they defied the prairie, passive, yet unconquered.

But they were approaching desperation. Days of heavy idleness, few words spoken, a silent sky and a silent earth were corroding their souls like poison. Perhaps the lack of speech was hardest to endure. But what was there to say in the face of that wide, empty horror? Still they refused to yield.

As time passed, he saw that her strength was failing. A strangeness brooded about her from which her husband recoiled with a feeling of being haunted; he was unaware that the same haggard spirit looked out of his own eyes. He wished that they

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might talk as in the careless days of spring—his heart swelled as he thought of those days. But it was impossible; the grip of the silent plains was on his throat. Why, he thought dumbly, did they need to be doomed? He tried prayer, but found that he was praying and cursing only to the power of the prairie.

One night, as they sat at supper, the man burst out with the bitterness of his heart. The woman listened, immovable. Her stolid silence and her brooding calmness filled him with sudden rage and he swore at her. His fingers gripped the edge of the table as though to keep him from striking her. She said nothing, but the wild anger of something at bay flashed in her eyes. When the tension relaxed, both felt a horror of the primitive animal each had seen in the other.

Next morning, as the man stood in the doorway, he noticed a haze at the north. Then he sniffed at the sharp morning air. Turning, he spoke to his wife and went out. A little later, the horses were plowing furrows around the shack. Toward the north, a deeper haze was growing. The horizon had a white, transparent color, as though a film of cloud were being drawn across the blue. The cloud-film grew rapidly. Then came the faint odor of smoke. The woman stopped a cry in her throat and stood, white-faced, hair awry in the morning wind. Had they not suffered enough? Then she started after her hus-

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band. He did not stop plowing nor even look up at her.

The cloud in the north thickened. It became veined with streaks of dull red. As it climbed in the sky, its outline broke into ragged, grotesque peaks, standing black and tempestuous against the pale blue sky. Then the wind strengthened and an acrid heat swept toward them.

The man stopped his work and put his team in the stable. He stroked their necks for a moment. The bitterness had gone from him and he spoke gently to the woman. She tried to answer with a smile, but could not. He awkwardly tried to comfort her.

From the north came a vibrating hum; the man looked up. Then his hands clenched slowly. Sweeping toward them, a distant wall of fire shone red through the growing smoke, its flames darting in pointed, wavering spires. It was moving with incredible swiftness toward the shack.

Then the fire caught them. Burning bits of grass, carried over the ploughed strip, started small fires in the thatch roof of the shack. The two fought the flames with wet sacks, their faces showing hard and wild through the eddies of smoke. The thin, blank face of the woman was transformed, it was livid with hate—with the blood-lust of the brute.

Several times the flames caught the shack, but each time they were beaten out. The barn caught and the man unloosed the horses. A shrill scream as they bolted directly through the wall of fire, and then

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the flames hid them. There, with the fire roaring above, in the vortex of a blind, insensate force, the naked force of the prairie, they still fought, beating out the flames upon the shack. The woman fell several times. At last she lay quiet on the hot ground, and the man fought the fire alone. It seemed to eat into his lungs, his head roared with it. Then he, too, gave up. He drew the woman close to him and putting a wet sack over her face, he crouched close to the ground, breathing in big, rasping gasps.

It seemed an eternity. When it was over, the man got up. Far to the south the fire still retreated. All around lay the blackened face of the prairie, with the mockery of blue sky crouching above. The man stooped to uncover the face of his wife. She lay unconscious. He carried her to the shack. When she opened her eyes, they were so bright and hard that the man shrank from them.

But, as he saw the thin, white cheeks and the beating veins on her forehead, he knew that the remnant of life would not last long. And for this he was glad. A few hours later, with the fierce heat of noon beating in at the door, she died. She had not the harsh strength to live. Life had not played fair with her. Dry-eyed and staring, the man sat beside her bed. All that afternoon he sat there. His face had fallen into long, hard lines, and was grim yet with defiance. Outside, the prairie smoked in the hazy afternoon.

That night, as the sun painted the west, he buried her. Then, staring across the blackened land, he

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watched the dimming sky. The glow grew fainter in the west. The angry red burned down into softer orange and yellow. Gray light closed over it. The man stood there a long time, watching night deepen, the only living creature in all the blackened waste.

The next morning was gray with rain. The sky hovered near the earth and bound it in. The man came out of the shack with a bundle on his shoulders. Head bent, eyes to the ground, he walked away into the west, into the mysterious part of the horizon. His figure became vague as the mists hemmed him in. The rain ceased for a moment. In the distance his figure stood black against the bank of fog on the horizon. Then the rain commenced again and he was lost behind the gray clouds. All about, the prairie stretched away—cold, dreary, lifeless.

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## The Soul's Triumph

By John G. Neihardt

Oh seek me not within a tomb;
  You shall not find me in the clay:
I pierce a little wall of gloom
  To mingle with the day.

I brothered with the things that pass,
  Poor giddy Joy and puckered Grief:
I go to brother with the grass
  And with the sunning leaf.

Not death can sheathe me in a shroud:
  A joy-sword, whetted keen with pain,
I join the armies of the cloud,
  The lightning and the rain!

Oh subtle in the sap a-thrill,
  Athletic in the glad uplift,
A portion of the cosmic will,
  I pierce the planet-drift.

My God and I shall interknit
  As rain and ocean, breath and air:
And oh the luring thought of it
  Is prayer!

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## Literature Local and General

By Johnson Brigham

It was possible for Keats, in a country village in England, to project his imagination into prehistoric Greece and people that world with gods and heroes and with youths and maidens personally conducted by heavenly guides. It has been found possible in our own time for Stephen Phillips, a strolling player with a Shakespearean vision, to look back over the walls of eighteen centuries and behold intensified the life of Herod's time with its fierce loves and hates. We take pride in the Indianan's remarkable achievement in picturing the age of the Man of Galilee so vividly that the dullest reader is brought to feel, as never before, the epic quality of the Gospel story.

World literature at its best, as in Homer, Euripides, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Goethe, Milton, and Browning, by reason of its largeness of treatment, its universality, and its grandeur, must ever stand highest in the world's esteem—an estimation not to be measured by the modern yardstick of circulation. But, great as are the achievements of the organ-voiced Miltons who create and people worlds, we cannot afford to deny ourselves the pleasure and profit to be derived from the humbler literary creations of those whose feet touch our earth, who reveal to us not ourselves alone but the life that is pulsating all about us. These writers also are discoverers. They, also, know the joy of the lone watcher of the skies, "when a new planet swims into

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his ken." The lesser lights in our literary firmament reveal to us the overlooked beauties of our own abiding places on the earth, the half-guessed complications of character and conditions in our own community life. These are the real artists, historians and sociologists of our time. To them we are lastingly indebted.

Not a few creators of world literature have also been portrayers of local color and creators of local literature, and, as such, interpreters of local history and life. While their work on broader lines must ever command first place in the world's regard, their more realistic work has made the more lasting impression. This dual art can be illustrated in one and the same personality. Grand as is the world-poet Goethe in the highest reaches of his imagination, his masterpiece, *Faust,* really means most to us as the soul-biography of a simple German maiden. Reading the poem we turn back with relief from the poet's high and long after-flights of song to the heart-story of a maiden's first love and her tragic undoing.

Great as is the world-embracing Shakespeare, who breathed upon the almost lifeless mass of classical and mediaeval romance and made it a living soul, yet nowhere does the master move us more than when he invites the soul with homely English scenes and English life. Here we come under the magician's spell. While his forest of Arden, locate it where we will, must ever remain a poet's dream, on reading of it or on seeing it as the play is acted we

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find ourselves delightfully at home in Shakespeare's England—our England, for he has made it ours—and we rejoice that we are made inheritors of such a home. Shakespeare has given added dignity even to English scenery, as he has to English history and life, thus further glorifying the high calling of literature and revealing the possibilities for the literary artist working in home fields. Let us take a single illustration of the master's power to dignify scenes in which the common mind, unassisted by the poet's spiritualized vision, sees only common things.

Early one morning, after a short night ride from Ostend, our steamer pierced the fog enveloping the harbor at Dover, and soon we found ourselves waiting for the train from Dover to London. In time the fog lifted and, as we walked and talked, our vision peopled the pebbly beach with Shakespeare's warring hosts as they appear in the matchless tragedy, *King Lear*. Yonder chalky cliff, not overwhelming to those of us who had stood in the presence of the great peaks of the Rocky Mountains, took on new grandeur as we recalled the fact that Shakespeare's Lear, as real to us as any of England's Richards or Henrys, had trod this height and on the higher height beyond had called down upon his foes the oak-cleaving thunderbolt; and that of Dover cliff Edgar had drawn for the blind Gloucester this memorable word-picture:

"How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!

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The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles. Half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!
. . . . . .
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice. . . . . .
. . . . . The murmuring surge,
That on the unnumbered idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong."

Greatness is at most a relative term. The artist who paints with glowing truth the bend of yonder river, making those who have passed it by a hundred times see its beauty all undreamt of before, is surely great,—though not to be compared with the world-greatness of the artist whose soul conceives a world in the making or a new earth and a new heaven. So he who pictures, in words that linger in the memory, the life of to-day on an Iowa prairie or can visualize the life of Iowa's pioneers with its receding background of Indian savagery, is unquestionably great,—though clearly not comparable with a Shakespeare, "on whose forehead climb the crowns o' the world," or a Milton, "skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity, God-gifted organ-voice of England," or an Aeschylus, projector of "dread shapes of Titan stature, emblems of Fate, and Change, Revenge, and Grief and Death, and Life."

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## Fancy

By Mahlon Leonard Fisher

He fills a dizzy cup for me: I dream
(As dreams the child, perchance, before 't is born)
Of lawns with all their grassiness unshorn,
And old aromas rising in a stream
So steadily inebrious they seem
To be the blended breath of all the flowers
Which fled from lockless insubstantial towers
The easy breezes ruined. I redeem
From sloth the shallop-shape that endless lay,
Long rotting, at unreal quays, and raise
A silk-and-silver ensign where it plays
With every zephyr; then forsake the bay—
The bay where late a flaming beacon shone —
And on a lonely sea set out alone!

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# The Midland Library

Messrs. Harper announce a new edition of their ten volume *Encyclopedia of U. S. History* at an early date.

Many Middle Western readers will feel especial interest in the new volume entitled *Citizens in Industry,* by the late Dr. Charles Richmond Henderson, just published by Messrs. Appleton.

The recent publication of the Macmillan Company, *Income,* by Dr. Scott Nearing, is given peculiar interest by the author's recent lamentable removal from the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Ernest Reece, of the Library School of Illinois, is the author of a valuable monograph on *State Documents for Libraries,* issued as Number 36 of Volume XII of the *University of Illinois Bulletin.*

*Literary California,* an anthology of selections in prose and verse from Californian writers, has been compiled by Mrs. Ella Sterling Mighels. The work will contain biographical and bibliographical material, and a full index. It will appear in the near future from the publishing house of John J. Newbegin, San Francisco.

Samuel Merwin, the Middle Western novelist who was joint author of that great book of the wheat belt, *Calumet K,* has recently published a new novel, *The Honey Bee* (The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis), which is attracting very favorable attention from the critics. It is a story of the modern American business woman, told with all Mr. Merwin's zest and wholesome energy.

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Two recent publications from the Government Printing Office are of interest to collectors of Americana and students of the American Indian. These are: *A Dictionary of the Choctaw Language,* by Cyrus Byington, edited by John R. Swanton and Henry S. Halbert; and a *List of Publications of the Bureau of American Ethnology, with Index to Authors and Titles.*

Professor Edwin Watts Chubb, Dean of Ohio University, is the author of a volume of *Sketches of Great Painters,* recently published by the Stewart and Kidd Company of Cincinnati. It consists of fifteen informal chapters on as many artists, written from a non-technical standpoint. The book will prove of real interest and value to the great majority of picture-lovers.

*The Rocky Mountain Wonderland* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), by Enos A. Mills, is a record of a life-time devoted to our great mountains and their wild inhabitants. It contains not only general description of scenery and discussion of resources, but also detailed studies of the lives of the mountain dwellers—mammals and birds and plants. The writer has grown old in his love of the Rockies, and the book is a treasure-house of rich experience.

An interesting field for publications is entered by the new book, *Nature and Science on the Pacific Coast,* edited under the supervision of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. It consists of a group of thirty-one essays, by specialists in their respective fields, on the natural history and resources, and political, social, and literary development of the Far West. All are adequate, condensed, non-technical discussions. Valuable maps and half-tones are included in the volume. Altogether, the enterprising

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people of the Far West have produced here the sort of work which should be done for every part of the country. Credit is due to the editors and contributors and also to the enterprising publishing house, Messrs. Paul Elder & Co., which has put the book out. It is to be hoped that the Middle West will soon offer support to a publishing house which will do as enthusiastic work for the region as this house does for the Far West.

Volume Fifteen of the *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society* contains, with few exceptions, the papers and addresses delivered before the society during the years 1909–1914. A large part of the volume is taken up with valuable reminiscences of early life in Minnesota. Some three or four of the papers deal specifically with the Indian troubles of the early days of the territory and state. Papers on the history of the parks and public grounds of Minneapolis and St. Paul are of general as well as local interest. Most interesting is the report by the museum committee of the society on *The Kensington Rune Stone.* This stone was discovered in the year 1898 on a farm near Kensington, Minnesota. The inscription on it, written in Runic characters, purports to be the writing of certain Northmen who penetrated this far into the continent in the year 1362, a century and a quarter before the voyage of Columbus. The genuineness of the inscription has been the topic of much discussion during the years since its discovery. Internal and external evidence have been cited both for and against it. The inscription was early pronounced spurious by noted runologists. It is interesting, therefore, to find that the committee charged with the investigation of the entire matter declare, in this year, their belief that the inscription is "a true historic record."

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# The Midland Chronicle

The July number of *The Teepee Book,* the promising little magazine published by Herbert Coffeen at Sheridan, Wyoming, possesses especial interest. A story entitled *Wild Fruit* is contributed by Elia W. Peattie, literary editor of *The Chicago Tribune.* The poem by Badger Clark, *The Canyon Trail,* is a fine, swinging song of the mountains. Lotta Allen Meecham contributes her version of the Indian legend of *Old Man Coyote and the Whirlwind.* Readers interested in the western region will do well to look up *The Teepee Book.*

Perhaps the most interesting item in *The Mid-West Quarterly* for July, from the point of view of many of our readers, is the article by Alvin S. Johnson on *The Professor Who Publishes.* Other contributions to this valuable number are: *Nietzsche,* by P. H. Frye; *French Opinions of Our Civil War,* by L. M. Sears; *Pacifism and the French Revolution,* by Charles Kuhlmann; and *A Classical Romanticist,* by George R. Throop.

The July number of *Poetry* is introduced by a poem from the pen of Padraic Colum, the Irish poet now lecturing in this country. In *Polonius and the Ballad Singers* he gives a picture of three strolling musicians with samples of the conventional songs still sung by these minstrels. Several comparatively unknown poets are represented in this issue, among them Leyland Huckfield, whose *Haunted Reaping* holds one with a certain weirdness slightly reminiscent of *The Ancient Mariner.*

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# The Midland

A MAGAZINE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

VOLUME I SEPTEMBER, 1915 NUMBER 9


## Love Divided

### A Sequence of Sonnets


By Howard Mumford Jones


"To heal his heart of long-time pain
One day Prince Love for to travel was fain
With Ministers Mind and Sense.
'Now what to thee most strange may be?'
Quoth Mind and Sense. 'All things above,
One curious thing I first would see—
Hell,' quoth Love."

—*How Love Looked for Hell.*

#### PRELUDE

The tale of radiant love when first they found
With tremulous feet the doorway to his shrine,
And how by gradual murder his decline
Grew with the poison of their self-wrought wound;
Of his stripped altar and the barren ground
Wherein their curious spirits, root and vine,
Insensate, pulled the grape that gave them wine,
Then plained at being athirst where springs abound:

This is the theme of his renewed debate,
Argued in life for yawning heaven to hear;
Or love or loss doth equally appear
The crushing of his soul. The round he trod


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Is world-old commonplace. . . . . And yet — this
prate
Has wrecked two souls that might have won to
God!

I

I am the presence men call Loved-Too-Well;
My brow is white with sadness and my eyes
Like wells of bitter wine hide all Love's cries
And passionate protests and each weeping spell;
My lips are as the crimson flower-buds Hell
Encarnadines with the shed blood of lies,
And in my breast are chambered all the sighs
And sadder song from heartstrings torn that swell.

Yea, on the pallor of my sorrowful face
Lost Love will sit and gaze, remembering
All the wild wonder of that first embrace,
And each significant, unvalued thing
Until, all desolate, he rise and fling
His fair, soft body down some garden space.

II

When the salt sterile years with arid lips
Flaked with dead ashes, shall salute my face
And each sad kiss engrave its burial place
With scars of unremembered fellowships;
When weeping love forgets his tender slips
Of hyacinthine flowers in some space
Of far-off meadows nourished, and the grace
Like dew from Faith's once lovely figure drips,

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In all that weary waste of words, O Friend,
That wrecked and ruined garden of dead hope
Whose flowers are faded and whose walls are dust,
What solace lasts, whereby our hearts may cope
With their own listlessness, save only trust
In one another lodged, world without end?

III

So spake we and so thought. Did thou or I
Slay the frail form of Love that lies between
Our guilty feet, encrimsoning the green
With spilled, sweet blood? His fall, his terrible cry,
His pallid lips, his face, his wings that lie
Wrecked in the dust (Ah me! Their radiant sheen!)
His lifeless feet, his hands once pure and clean—
Say, is it thou hast done these things or I?

What matters it? Love lieth cold and dead.
Woe unto life and woe unto our hearts!
Woe for red wrath and dark bloodguiltiness!
And woe for that still form whose stillness parts
Our separate shames! There on his princely head
Wet blood hath dabbled every golden tress!

IV

I heard the lying preacher drone his text
Down the high pulpit to the shadowed aisles;
Then as some Judas wreathes his face in smiles
Striving to hide his faithlessness, he next
Twined round the Word his proof that the convexed

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Heavens were built of love—the seas, the isles
Informed of love—that life was love—and the wiles
Of man were love, and God was love unsexed.

Lies, lies, all lies!—the earth, the sea, the sky,
And this cant parson and his devotees
Are lies, and faith and goodliness false cries,
And men and women liars, and God lies
And Love lies—how could love have fashioned these
When only yesterday I saw Love die?

V

Now do I taste the meaning of alone
To the full cup; each day and night shall cry
Like a raw nerve in rhythmic agony,
Henceforward as tonight. . . . This was her stone
Which on her regal hand imperial shone,
Love's token! It shall haunt me like an eye! . . .
Do not mistake, nor with cheap sympathy
Demean your hate! You shall not hear me moan!

I will not have your hands upon my face,
I will not take your false and fluent tears—
Go off from me!—Even the Man-God went
Apart to suffer in a secret place,
And my Gethsemane-pain shall not be spent,
A raree-show, for anyone who peers!

VI

I hate you, and I hate you, and I hate
The softness and the sweetness of your hair,

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Your clinging hands, your lissome neck, your fair
Broad forehead where Love sat so very late;
I hate your gentleness importunate,
That robs me of my selfhood, and your prayer
To pardon fancied slights as thin as air,
And most of all your womanhood I hate!

The tendrils of your hair are like a vine
That clutches with unshakable frail hand
About my throat and face; your eyes entwine
A mesh of pity traitorous as sand!
O God! Unsex me—blind me—stop my ears
To her soft voice and all-too-piteous tears!

VII

Nay, mine the fault! That added to my sin
Is that sin's punishment do I complain;
To see you suffer were not half the pain,
Though twice the anguish I now suffer in;
Yet were you hurt of me, my hurt had been
A heaven to the hell of you in pain,
And that my present wound was got in vain,
You being unscarred, my heaven is hell again.

Thus wrecked on either shore of balanced doubt
I sit before the fire, in torment tossed
Whether I had been happier you without
Or with the gain of you ere it was lost. . . .
Good God! What fools—what culprit fools we seem
Between the dust of life and what we dream!

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VIII

This wound we deem so exquisitely ours,
  This rarely supersensual smart, this drink
  Which parts us from the herd at whom we blink,
Two blinded victims of unusual hours. . . .
Faugh! We are weeds as they, not culled flowers!
  Our fancied choiceness is the primal link
  That binds us to the crowd; no less they think
Their common coupling fit for Eden bowers.

No less in them the lordly brows of life
  By parody are made to rabbit things;
  Like us they dare not pardon, dare not sin,
Remember or forget!—Yet here lie stings
  To lift us from the spawn: their blunter strife
  This mad last irony can never win!

IX

Well, let us play the game out, and endure
  The masque and mumming for another day.
  We shall smile pleasantly in the old way,
Meet at a friend's house, rise to the chance lure
Of table talk, discuss the latest cure
  For modern life; and meanwhile madly pray
  Whatever god commands us, that today
At least, he strip us not, nor show the sure

Wounds on the white flesh of our cowering souls,
  Nor, bringing us face to face, so nakedly
  Confront us with ourselves. The cap and bells
May hide as much as sackcloth. . . Who in the shoals

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Of a painted face would look for extreme hells
Of burned-out bitterness—save you and me?

X

Love's dead? 'Tis laughable! Thou pitiful fool!
When died he, then, whom thou lamentest so?
The mirthful gods, with aching sides in throe
Of helpless laughter caught, at thee, their tool,
Point with derisive finger. From his stool
See Mercury, contriver of the show,
Bow mockingly! As humorous pieces go,
Thine was more comic than the general rule.

What right hast thou to anguish or regret,
Who wert the lover in a pasteboard scene
Staged for the comic muse? The masque being done,
The puppets put away, the audience gone,
Thyself a puppet player should'st forget
The gilt-and-tinsel lover thou hast been.

XI

I will go forth into the autumn woods
And talk with the sharp wind in the dead trees,
Or in the rain-swept roadways watch the lees
Of the year's giant goblet spill in floods;
The naked hills, the frozen fields, the hoods
Of gray cloud-mourners, rising muffled,—these,
As I have read in all anthologies,
Have power to cure me of my cynic moods.

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Bite to the bone, ye purifying gales,
  And with your icy whips chastise my pride!
  Cleanse me, O Earth and Sky and bitter flails
Of winnowing Wind and Rain!—Yet even there
  Upon my lips I taste your salty hair,
  And see your spirit walking at my side!

XII

Each man looks down the dusty streets o' the world
  Toward one fair face, set star-wise in the sky
  Above the tenements; almost too high
It hangs, pure as a shining feather swirled
From the great wings of God, and later whirled—
  O miracle!—in one flame-figured cry
  To ride upon his heart. And men will die
Because a star has fallen, a flower unfurled.

So, glimpsed across the ledgers one wild day
  That turned the very acrid smoke to scent
  Of lawns unpastured by my eager soul,
You shone for me, a glory, an aureole! . . .
  Do all saints shuffle with the vows they pay,
  Or were you truly not the saint I meant?

XIII

Who dared to part us? What blaspheming god,
  A sly smile lurking on his hypocrite face,
  Lied in Olympus to his own disgrace,
Lied till he won from sleepy Jove a nod?
O he shall rue that smile though he were shod
  With lightning and destruction, and though space

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Rise up to hide him in a secret place
By man undreamed of and by gods untrod!

Upon the scrawny throat of toothless Time,
Where horrible pulsings beat, and up and down
His Adam's-apple leaps, a circus clown
Tuned to his jigging jests, O would each hand
Could close to kill as sometimes in sublime
Dreams, on your throat I feel these fingers band!

XIV

The wild day sinks beneath a bank of clouds
Dashed with raw sunlight in the dying west;
A troop of dry leaves, eddying on the breast
Of unseen gales, is scattered like a crowd
Of desolate, dumb birds; a silent shroud
Is on the meadows and the wooded crest
Which late were live with many a feathered guest,
And in my heart the autumn wind is loud.

O voice of God across the naked earth,
Thou wailest summer as a guest that's gone,
Who smiled so sweet and must so soon depart!
O voice of God across my empty heart,
Mourning a guest so sweet, so lost, so lone,
Who stayed from dying spring to autumn's birth!

XV

As one who drinks of rare and delicate wines,
And tastes rich food, and hears enthralling strains
Of music mixed with voices like soft rains
Upon wet lawns; as one whose table shines

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With shaded light of candles, marks the signs
With wonder of departing guests—complains,
"Outside the night is empty—see! The panes
Are choked with darkness," and at last resigns

The banquet with a sigh—even such an one
Since we uprose in haste from our fair feast
And went forth into darkness—such am I;
I stumble in the dark and fall and cry,
Yearning for dawn to kindle in the east,
Yearning for thee and the delaying sun.

XVI

We both are dead and our twin futile ghosts
Are blown along an echo down the world
Where shadowy men like withered leaves are swirled
In empty dances that no voice accosts
To learn the meaning of those phantom hosts,
In hollow strife on aimless breezes hurled
To the far corners of a lost, vague world—
We two are dead, and these are but our ghosts.

See! Here is one that weeps a phantom friend,
And there a shadow, shaping shadowy things
Which once were wares to buy, and silks, and posts
To purchase statesmen—here are marriage rings,
And phantom coins and phantom hours to spend—
We twain are dead amid a world of ghosts.

XVII

I was anhungered and athirst for love.
Somewhere, I thought, his deep cool wells must be

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Like liquid pearls that glass eternally
The calmness of the sapphire sky above;
I was aweary of the press and shove
In life's tumultuous market place; to me
For certain days thou wert the wizardry
Of affluent springs I was desirous of.

So for some little while I drank and stilled
The vague resentment and the vain desire
And passionate thirst that lie in souls self-willed
And sting like poison and destroy like fire:—
Didst thou grow weariful, or was it I
Who chafe and change like life continually?

XVIII

We have by introspection sought for love,
Stealing by candle-light past abstruse walls
Or hoping to surprise him in dun halls,
Bat-haunted and abandoned; we did shove
Into queer doorways of the brain to prove
What subtler passions lay within. Now falls
His crushing mandate on us and appalls;—
Lost is the obvious joy 'gainst which we strove.

O not by the fine-wrought lancet's pricking tip
In intellectual clinics over sex
Is love made whole; he is no butterfly
Stuck on a pin for scientific eye!
Unless he springs like laughter to the lip
Of probings such as ours he little recks.

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XIX

We were not worthy, friend, we were afraid!
Our souls are cowards, and they dare not speak,
Each unto each unveiled; instead they seek
To hide in figleaves and, being overlaid
With manners, customs, usages, so trade
(Lest they see friendship's nakedness and shriek
In elegant distress) blind words and weak,
Shrinking like Adam from life's flaming blade.

O for one hour of truthful intercourse,
Soul bared to soul and naked heart to heart,
One hour alone with only you and God,
And all the mad world else a thing apart,
Its hollow forms like scattered shards in the sod
Broken and flung by love's tremendous force!

XX

We were athirst for some diviner drink
That should transmute with subtle alchemy
The weariness of earth and sky and sea
Into some mightier meaning. Did we shrink
From ultimate sunless lands, or from the brink
Of fathomless gray seas? Did ever we
Falter or fall because some deeps there be
Whereinto love and all things mortal sink?

Nay, we were not at fault. The unknown wine
Wherefor we wandered in far fields and strange
And tasted alien grapes from Eschol's vine—
Who knows if anywhere such juice may be,

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Or if our journeying's futility
Were not the work of Time and Chance and Change?

XXI

Lo, I have asked too much—I should have known.
Under serener skies in other climes
Of some forgotten Golden Age whose times,
As the salt sea-spray on the west wind blown,
Have passed to nothingness, we would have grown,
Linked like the marriage of two matchless rimes,
To perfect understanding. Our love mimes,
And can no more, the face of what is flown.

Even as the maddened swirl of autumn leaves
Caught by the dancing winds, the insane years,
Athirst for some new draught from alien springs,
Hither and thither whirl on restless wings.
Here, here and here the flying goal appears,
And there, unsought, abandoned friendship grieves.

XXII

So solaced and so sternly comforted
I am grown silent and dare kiss the rod
And only suffer. Unto each gray god
Is my renunciation made with head
Bowed to his will, full-knowing love is fled
To some dim, distant region, and this sod
Above thy grave, O Friend, was all we trod
In love or life—and even this was dead.

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O bound to me by one last, lingering kiss,
What profiteth regret? Be thou as dead!
Two hearts upon this world have gone amiss
Which might have conquered heaven! Not ours the shame
When time was all awry!—If love be fled,
It is the years, not we, that are to blame.

*(An Interval)*

XXIII

The days that were, the days that might have been!
Two companies are they of love and hate,
The one with hair and brow all desolate,
The other splendid as the cherubin;
These with the shameful eyes of shameful sin
And lying lips of cowardice, from the gate
Scourge their celestial compeers while they wait,
Stainless and silent, for the soul within.

O God! And down those ghastly corridors
With such a sound as when the lips of Hell
Broke out with laughter while the archangel fell,
Like scattering wraiths of broken cloud I see
The white-robed impotent splendors fail and flee
As hope forsakes a soul whom heaven abhors!

XXIV

Upon the frozen hills the first wet snow
Has delicately laid its finger prints;
The storm-strewn sky in fragmentary glints
Of dying sunshine lights the earth below;

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The wild winds from the gray north ever blow
Their shrieking battle-blasts; the pine trees wince
Before them, and the tossing lake long since
Has sowed its leaden waves with spin-drift snow.

O not in Lydian measures wrapt of spring,
Nor with the amorous summer on thy mouth,
Nor the rich-landed autumn, dream beset
With golden visions of the golden south,—
Not thus, O Earth, but crownèd with the ring
Of winter can'st thou teach me to forget.

XXV

In outward seeming we lived as before
Some dreadful beats of time after the wreck
Of our twin selves; and still no slightest speck
Of malice hinted at love's closing door.
At dinner we were seated as of yore
By tactful hostesses; dancing, a beck
Of her lithe hand, a bending of the neck—
I sprang to walk ten feet across the floor.

So closed we moved in pacing side by side
The dull routine of every aching day,
And yet our sundered spirits ranged as wide
As heaven from hell! What bitterness, you say?
Last night before the fire I would have died
To touch her hair in that same bitter way!

XXVI

Not that you pass me with averted head
Nor with dead lips speak audibly a name

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That is not mine, nor ever was the same,
Nor yet for hand unclasped or tears unshed,
Or aught of what the prying world has read,
For none of these do I feel any blame.
This is my crucifixion and my shame:
I am not man enough to think you dead.

But always with unbearable sharp pain
Across the city streets where you go by,
Or through the impassive blankness of the sky
Of autumn fields or woodland soaked with rain,
The torment comes anew, inexplicably—
Your kisses thirst upon my lips again.

## XXVII

Bowed to the master-will as by a wind
The forest trees are swayed, the splendid tone
Of Beethoven's Seventh is made the leader's own,
Rising and falling with his gestured mind;
I sit and listen; next to me, a kind
Fat, greasy German comes to dream alone;
On the other side two brainless women drone
Their gossip of the latest she maligned.

Is there no rest from you? You dance along
The tripping scherzo of the violins;
I see you smile amid the allegro's dins,
And in the andante's prayer at even-song,
I hear your voice as when that night we stood
And kissed—and hated—in the moonlit wood.

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XXVIII

Thank God we came not to the crown of love!
Go down upon your knees and bow the head
That we have lain not in a common bed
While the slow hours did love's illusion prove!
Though the long pain we two are conscious of
Through heart and brain in agony is sped
Until the very skies are cracked and dead,
Our present pain how much were *that* above!

And yet—and yet—I held you one perfect,
Co-equal with all heaven—above our strife
Ignoble in the dust—great-souled, erect,
Heroic, taintless, pure! This me repents:
I placed you on those skiey battlements
And found you grubbing in the rags of life.

XXIX

Remembrance with your letter that I burned
Took shape with burning: how the wind would lift
That day the tumbled boughs, the road, the drift
Of cloud across the pane. Each sight returned,
Each sound and thought and speech; again inurned
In one vast western chasm the sun made shift
To grapple with twilight till the last lit rift
Died out of heaven as died the love we spurned.

I hear the clock tick as I heard it then,
And even as now my hands shook and my heart. . .
Dear God! Mere loss is not my agony!

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With scalpel poised to stand as one apart,
Probing for hidden sores love's long goodbye,—
This is the surgery that murders men.

## XXX

Lone, lone, alone—a cry comes o'er the sea
From the vague waters and the phantom coasts.
Lone, lost, alone—and as light ghosts
That die upon the wind are said to flee,
Before that wandering cry tempestuously
Scud the white sails of scattering proud hosts,
And now one fades like mist, and now one boasts
The lonely mastery of the lonely sea.

Lone, lone, alone—a rag of sunbeam glints
Upon the vessel's solitary sail,
And now the shapeless clouding rain in sheets
Obscures the ocean and the visions fail.
Love sinks and leaves me solitary, since
Man voyages in single ships, not fleets.

## XXXI

I thought how once, when sitting side by side
In the illusory days we knew of yore,
Your arm loose round my neck, my head bent o'er
Your quivering lips to kiss their amorous pride,
And by that kiss becoming deified,
In one brief instant while my lips forbore
To taste their prize, my heart said, "Ever more
This hour regret—love has no more to hide!"

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O very words of bitter truth! Though all
The years pass by me that still lie afar
And bid me drink their memory-killing gall,
And though love rise again, that hour shall war
Against him, and that ever-crimson scar
Burn on his face, a mark memorial!

XXXII

Ah, I was not resigned, who sought to cheat
With vain words and vain reasons and vain prayer,
Voiced in vain wailings on the empty air
My inexplicable sentence of defeat!
As in old hours when pain's great hammer beat,
My whimpering lips lay hidden in your hair,
So hid I in enforced oblivion, where
I fled from many memories' tracking feet.

But now—come back, O dearer than the dead
Are dear to those who cherish them the more
Because in vain. Return, beloved, fled
Into far skies whither I dare not soar!
I am alone, and all uncomforted
I cry aloud! (She hears me—nevermore!)

XXXIII

The innumerable hosts of every day!—
Across the city street I saw them come,
Drab regiments of dingy gray, and some
Were bent like hooded friars who pick their way,
And some mouthed o'er again the self-same say
Of bargain and sale; and others were as dumb.

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Listless and slow, they plodded by, and from
One cope I saw peer forth a face of gray.

Their number was as sifted sand, their march
Monotonous as the fall of autumn rain.
O truly Hell that life should over-arch
No grander company than these living dead! . . .
A figure raised its eyes. "We are," he said,
"No less recorded in God's book of pain."

## XXXIV

What paths allure thee and what pleasures call?
Dost thou know any profitable peace?
In what light scoffing hast thou found surcease,
Letting thy bitter wit and wisdom fall
At restless banquets? Or in somber hall
And shadowed cloister of a mind at ease,
Hast thou remembered that all agonies cease,
And so forgotten life beyond the wall?

O shadowy lips that moving, do not move,
I would pay all life's riches, part by part,
To know what sorrow lingers in thy heart,
What speech of me, what tenderness, what strife;
Or, failing answer from the lips of life,
To read in death the riddle of our love!

## XXXV

1.

Let us forget her, O ye lost fair days,
As the bare branch forgets the leaves that were,

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As the spent wave forgets its foam-flower;
Let us forget her, for although ye raise
A song as tremulous as the night-bird's lays
That lovers dream by, yet, O hours, to her
The fair sweet lips of song no more may blur
A passion of fierce kisses 'gainst her face.

Let us forget the fall of her soft feet,
The amber riches of her golden hair;
She has forgotten us: it is not well,
Even though lost love be most desirable,
To loose the burden of remembered hair,
To count the footfalls of remembered feet.

## XXXVI

2.

Let us forget her lips, O longing lips
Disconsolate, that thirst for their warm drink
Out of love's golden cup; let us fain think
No more the way her each word slowly drips
Down from the aureate beaker which love sips,
Nor how her wavering smile would seem to shrink
Across her hurt, crushed mouth, and sweetly link
Her words, and make her silence amorous quips.

O lips ye long for, whereupon Love tells
His mystic rosary and calls down his flame,
O loathed lips that sting and burn like fire,
O lips that sear my memory with her name,
When shall my lips forget you? . . . "When desire
For thine upon her lips no longer dwells."

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## XXXVII

3.

Let us forget her, O ye empty hands
  Wherein her heart was laid for cherishing
  And once her hair lay. Love is a hateful thing:
Let us give thanks that from his aching bands
We are set free forever in all lands.
Let us give thanks that now his bitter ring
  Is lifted from us, even as Day's bright wing
Fans back the hair of Night in star-sweet strands.

"Yea, but within us did her hands once lie,
  And we have touched her mouth and breast and brow,
  And her kiss is upon us, and the ghost
Of her white fingers, clasping us, doth tie
  Our strength with things remembered. O how
  Dare we forget her hands, dear hands and lost?"

## XXXVIII

4.

Let us forget her, my poor, dazzled eyes,
  Forget her face and eyes grown blind and gray;
  Even though, close-lipped, we clung and her head lay
Along my arm, bent backward, and the prize
Of her warm lips was mine, and her shut eyes
  Slumbered within her flower-face, lest they slay
  My sight with splendor on that deathless day,
Let her eyes vanish as a day that dies.

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Open or closed or slumbering or awake
  Love tinctured them with heart-ache. Can ye not
  Forget them, O my eyes, for her own sake? . . .
"All else of her may vanish like the spot
  Where love was in thy bosom—all else flies,
  But we are haunted by her hurt, wide eyes."

XXXIX

Change, chance and change—the sleepless Shadow sings
  Upon his shadowy harpstrings but one change,
  And all things pass like formless dreams and strange
Save the gray Shadow; even as he strings
His instrument with vain rememberings,
  His harp fades into mist and phantoms grange
  Upon the cloudy air, whilst round him range
The ghosts that once were half-immortal things.

Change, chance and change—even that Wraith shall pass
  To unimaginable realms of air,
  For nothing keeps its place but fluent change,
And all our hearts find beautiful and fair
  As our love was are shadows and alas!
  Must wax and wane as chance shall so arrange.

XL

One perfect day that broached in radiant morn
  The deep, full-circled joy it reached at noon,
  Then faded like love's kiss until the moon

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Entombed it in the sea's white burial bourn—
Our day it was, an hour of heaven torn
From the great time of friendship's plenilune,
Flung at our feet and fading all too soon
Into the night-tide of our separate scorn.

One day—one single day! How many days
Have waxed to affluence and waned to death,
How many hours lie buried in our hearts,
Faded and frail as pallid love's last breath! . . .
Yet of that myriad but one shadow darts
Its phantom hand across our diverse ways.

XLI

One hour we had together—and no more.
One hour we had: if it grew dark as rain,
Or hid its eyes and moaned and died in pain,
We are no less its purpose; score on score
The ravening days shall push and jostle o'er
Its quiet grave, some mad with greed for gain,
Some feverish, some pale, some black with stain
Of sin—ours shall return—ah! nevermore.

"Where has it passed, this hour that was my friend,
And friend to you, and mocked us, and so died?"
Nay! Not for all our tears that hour shall end!—
Our fateful period changed not with the tide
Of fleshly things; thou and that hour blend
And I to both am fatefully allied.

XLII

Believe not that our parting was love's end,
Or that the inexorable years can bring

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To our divided selves no dearer thing
Than friendship was. We do not wholly spend
The substance of our souls upon one friend
Without some recompense, nor loosely fling
Our hearts away like coins for pleasuring
Some wastrel crouched beside the path we wend.

Love learns by giving to receive, and love
Because we gave, will come to each again
The fairer for his momentary pain;
And this, our ruined friendship, yield him place
On bright immortal wings to soar above
The strange vicissitudes of Time and Space.

XLIII

" 'Tis better to have loved and lost," he said
Who was our last great singer; pondering
I traced the long way we had gone in spring,
Full-blown summer and autumn richly red
With leaves of former sundawns; by the bed
And cross of snow that guards how dear a thing
Lost unto us I stood, and there the ring
Of friendship closed like four swift seasons sped.

Wonder, acceptance, self-distrust and death
Round out love's circle; let us pray, O Friend
That love shall follow love down life's strange river
Increasingly to some great hidden end
As year crowds year; let us believe love saith:
"Better to lose than to love one forever."

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XLIV

Better to lose, else all were bitterness,
And life a shadow cast upon the floor
Of unregardful earth, and passing o'er
As the cloud shadows and the breezes pass.
Rather believe our ruined friendship has
A something which is nobler than before;
That our friends fail, but love is more and more
And fades not with the years like changing grass.

Did we presumptously make trial to hold
The majesty of all-imperial love?
Nay, we were weak—our feet were overbold
To reach his distant heights. Love sits above
Our extreme aspirations, and he sends
His revelations through successive friends.

XLV

Words, words, mere words!—In doubtful reading
Of some dim law of life we can not learn
Shall solace lie? Or love's long heart-ache burn
Less bitterly, such emptiness in heeding?
Loss is not dear, nor death's worth so exceeding
That loneliness doth into singing turn
And clasping unavailing air, so spurn
Love's low-lying head and piteous sweet pleading.

To taste the kisses of that mouth remote,
To touch her face, to toss her splendid hair
Let down for me, in hand-fulls from her throat,
My pillar of fire—to set my lips just where

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Life pulses in her neck—O this were worth
The kingdoms and philosophies of earth!

XLVI

Ah, what to me is love's work in this earth,
Who brood and hate and brood and sonnetize
The brooding and the hate for alien eyes
And find it subject for peculiar mirth!
Strange! I can sit and weight this phrase's worth,
That word, this sentence, shift, philosophize,
Speak sagely of the goal, the loss, the prize,
And know that Love has known his death and birth!

And will you know I do not write it all,
But hide by showing half, as wood-birds do
That show themselves and keep their eggs concealed?
Or will you think, "At last he stands revealed,
Stands for the whining puppy I let fall,"
And hate me more for half betraying you?

XLVII

The days of life are as a pack of cards
Thumbstained and soiled and scattered on the grass,
And interspersed with many an emptied glass,
And many a wine-pot shattered into shards;
Still some slight fragrance and some echo guards
That arbor where the silent hours pass
With muffled feet across the sodden grass:
For there my lady and I once played at cards.

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We played with cards and uttered many a jest
To see the summer flowers swoon and fall,
And the dead woodbine crumbling on the wall;
The stake was happiness—she lied—and I
Struck from her hand the cards where now they lie,
She smiled and went—and I forget the rest.

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## Autumn on the Upper Mississippi

By A. Jerrold Tirje

Do not shy so, timid reader. This will be no between trains automobile skirry at Moline, St. Paul, or Lake Itasca, dallying to commend the possibilities for motor-boating at Davenport, puffing to an admiring halt before the "wonderful, sloping wooden apron" that in the appropriately-titled Flour City has replaced the "noble, aboriginal beauty" of St. Anthony Falls, and finally coughing to a full stop where the Mississippi "wafts down lumber" from the "lap" of its "mother," Lake Itasca. Nor will it be a canoeist's foaming rhapsody over the magnificences of the upper gorge—punctuated literally and figuratively only by the hair-breadth escapes of the author from rapid and whirlpool. It will be but casual fragments from the mind of an uncommercial, unscientific, unsportsmanlike stroller.

More—the stroller must blushingly confess that he does not know even the seventieth part of the upper Mississippi. Day by day he merely wanders over a stretch of some dozen miles at the most.

Of the material charm of the Great River he likes the best, so he thinks at intervals, the bridges Or is it the water? It was Ruskin who exhausted the vocubularies of a half-dozen writers like the stroller, in the essay to depict the wavelets of the Rhone near Geneva. Did they really dimple any more fascinatingly than the sun-touched ripples of

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the Mississippi where the river sweeps cliff-banked through south-east Minneapolis—here at least not meriting its pompous epithet, Flour City. Placid homes just glimpsed beyond enmeshing trees are not unsuggestive of the dwellings of Morris's London-to-be, unless (and the stroller has the privilege of shutting eyes, if not ears) a motor-car honks its balmy way up some lawn-fretted avenue.

Not that there are always Perdita-like wavelets. The Father of Waters is too Cleopatrian for that. A real river has its miles-long stretches of seeming inactivity. It is these that make the stroller wish to shake moist hands with the river. Such stretches are like long, sinuous talks with a choice friend. The pace is possible on either side—at least it seems possible, for the Mississippi no doubt outstrips the comrade on the cliffs above. With little rivers there is no likelihood of such intimacy. Little rivers are either dull, sluggish things that breed impatience as one stumbles through endless meadows, or they are hoydenish, brawling racers that make one gasp to keep up. Take the Minnehaha. Above its far-famed Falls of the Laughing Water (what a misnomer, that) the river meanders until one quite loses temper as he slops hither and thither, then thither and hither again; and below the Falls the river absolutely tears along, as though it had something important to contribute to the Father of Waters. Fussy thing—for all the world like an over-age puppy snapping at small trees instead of dress-hems, or like a boyish man alternately frittering and rough-housing.

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Not, understand, that a grown dog should have no spells of delightfully-revived puppyhood, that a man should never lie down in the high grass of intimate friendship and kick and roll to his heart's content. But dogs must mainly group with dogs and men with men. Just so with the real rivers—in general they silently do their duties.

Play tremendously they can, of course. Once the Mississippi romped wildly over the Falls of St. Anthony. But peace to the bib and tucker of the generously visible and ever-useful "wooden apron". In the stroller's most-extended walks the river, as it is, plays but once. And that is, as it should be, a delightful surprise. Ordinarily the stroller much prefers to stay on the cliffs. There are, it is true, water-edge paths to which he sometimes descends. But in following these one must climb—swing down here, scramble up there. For its own sake the stroller loves climbing. Climbing in the mountains is fascinating — the mountains are there to be climbed. Views? Nonsense. He who yearns for views should cling to Pike's Peak Railways and St. Gothard Pass Tunnels. The mountains rise austere, yet welcoming. The Alps loved Hannibal, the stroller is sure, and the White Mountains the Ambitious Guest. Did these lofty-souled ones seek views? And as the mountains disdain all who can not climb, so the Great River indubitably prefers that one walk and talk with it. How can one, if he is forever splashing in the runnels streaming everywhere, or clutching at branches to hold balance amid

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loose boulders? Indecorous—most indecorous, such treatment of the ever-flowing river.

Still, at odd moments, the Mississippi calls peremptorily to the stroller to "come down." Its syllables, indeed, are vast—like those of some tongue antedating Babel. Half-grown Minnehahas can use no more ear-filling words for their boasted "cataracts." The call comes first when one is far above and many rods distant. He who catches its grave sonorousness asks "A falls here?" Again the river sends out its message. One is nearer now; yet vainly one stares through overhanging foliage. But, if he loves the river, he obeys. He descends leisurely by clay-dug steps—the river speaks a bit irritably; he slides and falls, and, as he clumsily rights himself, he notes beneath him a dam. Truly the Mississippi has its surprises. Dark-green, almost black, and of smooth treacherous depth, the river whips rougishly around a vast stone escarpment of the dam, and into a channel whence, all-foamless, it rushes down to dash against lining rocks spray-clouds far whiter than those of Minnehaha. Nor does the water fall far. Here is no Niagara—not even a Saint-Anthony-as-it-was. Yet the river's voice is bold and jubilant. A real river is speaking.

Close friendship with the Mississippi, at least for the stroller, is possible only from the banks. There the very air is friendly; in Autumn it envelopes you with just the right thickness of warmth. On the bridges it grows tricksy. It would snatch your cap, if it could; it likes to make you draw your coat

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tighter. And the river slips away from one so; it suggests, too, Thanatopses and ghastly "foot-prints on the sands of time." Usually, then, one does not linger on the bridges for the river's sake. One pauses to scan the river's acquaintances, its friends, its children. From the banks, indeed, one can love the bridges—great awkward giants, with one foot shaking hands, as it were, with the not altogether complimented river. The bridges are big and stout, and so admirable compatriots of the Mississippi. Beauty and the Beasts, perhaps. Or, better, Beauty and the personification of Handsome is as Handsome does. Lamb loved chimney-sweeps—at a measurable distance. So does the stroller love the Mississippi Bridges.

Who are the river's acquaintances? Just tolerated, fancies the stroller, is the huge iron basket which, at a tangent visible from the Nicollet Island Bridge, creaks noisily on a cable above the stream—near the Flour Mills no self-respecting river would use its own name. The basket is not even so romantic as the straddling Goliath of a Ferris Wheel which destroys the glory of the Seine. Dear, however, to the river must be the university buildings and that noble tower—the stroller refuses to learn its moneyed title—that rises serenely above the Flour City's smoke; from the Lake Street Bridge the smoke lightens to dreamy haze.

The friends of the river are the ravines and the trees and the scarped cliffs.

Near Lake Minnetonka the birches gleam white

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across turquoise lakes. They are beautiful. But they are not the birches of the Great River. They are, as it were, a band of Louis XV ladies; they are grouped just so and the pose is perfect. The lakes, like the Versailles alleys, are only the proper setting. In general, the Mississippi's birches are not obtrusive. They are not languid. Sturdy and graceful, they cling alone at perilous angles, or gather in comrade fashion to nod goodfellowship to the river. And the oaks toss down their yellow and red children — not "pestilence-stricken multitudes" nor "hectic", but hardy Autumn-tanned voyagers eager to adventure upon the bosom of the Father of Waters. Sometimes the stroller is tempted to give them cognomens. Why not? Are not at least the sober-suited among them more fittingly to be christened Hennepin and Nicollet than are the painfully New-Yorkish avenues of the Flour City?

But, after all, the trees, even when they touch finger-tips with the water's edge, are not the real confidants of the Mississippi. They are not very old. They are not always loyal. Sometimes the stroller has the whim that they strive to call his affection from the river to them. Else why the paths that wind so far from the cliff-brink, and wherein the bravest-colored oaks and the most silvery birches lay snares for the wanderer's senses and thoughts? Not so with the ravines and the cliffs. From the far-off era of mammoth and cave-bear the cliffs at least have held tryst with the river as it yearned

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to draw them near in comrade-love. Paltry, by the side of that attachment, the clinging of oak and birch. Paltry, even, the claim of the ravine of the Minnesota. As for the other reputed ravine, that of the Minnehaha, the stroller indignantly denies that it is a ravine. It seeks love for its little self—does not repeat the charms of the Mississippi's gorge, like the Minnesota's faithful chorus. The Minnehaha has a "romantic glen." Lovers seldom moon on the cliffs of the Mississippi; if they do, the stroller and others of his ilk delight in causing them to start guiltily. In the Minnehaha's "glen" lovers lurk by the dozens. And they are brazenly open in affection.

What does the Great River feel for its islands—those grotesque or beautiful things of its own begetting? Did Uranos love the children begot upon Rhea? He devoured them, we hear. The stroller knows only that *he* loves all the islands—whether they sprawl ungainly, like new-born babes of nondescript color and no garments save breech-clouts, or whether, in clinging drapery of green, they seduce the eye with varied charm of "nature" fresh "adorned." The most enticing islands known to the stroller are two. Below Lake Street Bridge rises the shapeliest and most alluring of all islands—a very Venus of islands. Trees to the water's timidest wavelet— unsurpassed profusion of shaded greens with here and there bold dash of scarlet—rippling channel on one side, sober-flowing darkness of current on the other—it is an island the stroller

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would never by any possibility visit. Who does not prefer the Venus de Milos mirrored about the mere statue in the Louvre to the statue itself? Who would invade the woods of Westermain, when he might linger on enchanted borders? Who would seek bodily the Witch of Atlas?

But the brother-island far down the river the stroller longs for the acquaintance of. Alas! Here only does the river rush stormily as though warning canoe and motor-boat from annoying its youngest-born. For here are no dainty leaf-garments. Sand alone kicks itself out—sand sweet as the flesh of a baby—provided the baby bathes as often as the islet. In all verity, here is the magic sand of the stroller's childhood, that tantalizing sand which was never glimpsed of him save upon prim Sunday promenades when by no stretch of imagination were shoe and stocking to be doffed. Such reaches of sand, too; for this is a river-babe like the child of the folk-tale who gathered up fields in its apron. Surely of such sand was the shore of Crusoe's island.

Crusoe—the "very word is as a bell" to remind the stroller that he is alone with his typewriter and the hour is late. Under a soft October heaven the Mississippi rolls by, some blocks away. And of its glories at night the stroller has said nothing—of its other devotees nothing—of its birds and snakes nothing. But it was not his intent to piece together laboriously the mosaic of his love for the river. Were he of such calculating nature, he would monotonously

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each day circumnavigate the Mississippi boulevards in the automobile a too-zealous friend asks his companionship in.

Yet the stroller can not say his due *Vale* to the river without touching on its great immaterial charm. Friar Bacon's brass head spoke four momentous syllables: "Time is—time was." The Mississippi can utter the four, and add: "I too was —I too am—I too shall be." But the stroller will not limn the pictures that all true Mississippi-lovers will draw in awe-struck silence.

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# The Midland Library

A complete history of the Cheyenne Indians is the latest product of the pen of George Bird Grinnell. It is published under the title, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (Charles Scribner's Sons, $3.50 net). The relations of this great tribe to the various other western Indians are discussed, as well as its part in several famous campaigns against the whites. The value of the volume is largely increased by excellent maps.

L. H. Bailey, editor of the *Cyclopedia of American Horticulture,* and recognized as one of the foremost authorities on agricultural and horticultural subjects in the United States, has written a little book of a new sort in *The Holy Earth* (Charles Scribner's Sons, $1.00 net). An effort is made to point out the spiritual significance of nature in rural life. The book should meet with wide favor.

D. Appleton and Company announce for publication in October an *Introduction to the Study of Sociology,* by Edward C. Hayes, Professor of Sociology in the University of Illinois. It is a comprehensive work, discussing in detail the practical social problems of today, and culminating in a consideration of education from the sociological viewpoint.

*Regulation of Railroads and Utilities in Wisconsin,* by Fred L. Holmes (D. Appleton and Company, $2.00 net) is a discussion of the treatment of railroad and public utility problems in Wisconsin, a Middle Western state which was a pioneer in matters of regulation.

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Devotees of American arts and crafts will find much of marked interest to them in Walter A. Dyer's new book, *Early American Craftsmen* (The Century Company, $2.40 net). Mr. Dyer is already well known as the author of *The Lure of the Antique.* In the present work he treats not only the work of the early American craftsmen—in pottery, glassware, etc.,—but also the personal lives and characters of the men themselves.

Two additions to the large number of books on the Civil War are announced for fall publication by G. P. Putnam's Sons. They are *Dramatic Episodes of the Civil War,* by Rossiter Johnson ($1.75 net); and *Lincoln and the Episodes of the Civil War,* by W. E. Doster ($1.50 net). The latter volume joins with four other Lincoln books in the fall and winter lists of American publishers to show the ever-increasing interest of the American public in all the phases of the life of the great president. These are *Tad and His Father, an Appreciation of Lincoln,* by Lauriston Bullard (Henry Holt and Company, 50 cents net); *The Heart of Lincoln,* by Wayne Whipple (Geo. W. Jacobs and Company, 50 cents net); *Abraham Lincoln,* by Lord Charnwood, in the new *Makers of the Nineteenth Century* series (Henry Holt and Company, $1.75 net); and the new and cheaper edition of Francis F. Browne's fine work, *The Everyday Life of Abraham Lincoln* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, $1.75 net).

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# The Midland Chronicle

There is variety and evenness of merit in the offerings of the August *Poetry*. The sights and sounds and moods of the mountains are told with a fresh and sure touch in the *Mountain Poems* of Harriet Monroe. Antipodal to these in theme and treatment is the concluding series of the number, *Battle*, by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson. Here is a terse and telling picture of an every-day tragedy of war-times.

The August number of *The Teepee Book* is featured by an interesting and dramatic account of "The Wagon Box Fight," a remarkable battle between Indians and white men fought in pioneer days near Fort Phil Kearny, Wyoming.

The current issue of *The School Review*, Chicago University Press, contains three leading articles by western and middle-western writers: *The English Parish and Education at the Beginning of American Colonization*, by Carl Russell Fisk of the University of Wisconsin; *The Social Sciences in the Secondary Schools*, by Howard T. Lewis of the University of Idaho; and *The Junior College in California*, by A. A. Gray of Berkeley, California.

*The Drama* for August publishes an English translation of *The Marriage of Olympe*, a play by the French dramatist, Emile Augier. The translation is done by Barrett H. Clark, who also contributes a biographical and critical sketch of the author. Of peculiar interest to students of Shakespeare is an article by Charlotte Porter, *Playing Hamlet as Shakespeare Staged It in 1601.*

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# The Midland

A MAGAZINE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

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## The Prairie Seasons III

## Dominant Themes of Autumn

By Selden L. Whitcomb

This October afternoon, the wind from the south sways the tops of elm and maple, sycamore and ash, still clad in heavy though somewhat thinned foliage. The lawns are green, the sky is cloudless blue above an atmosphere of almost summer mildness. Cicadas drone persistently. The blossoms of yellow wood-sorrel and white snakeroot are fresh beside the club-house walk. Only a few days ago, a little after sunrise, a whippoorwill was calling from the wooded slope below the campus. Yet it is autumn. The leaves are scattered on the ground below the arbor vines, the pawpaws are ripe, and the persimmons in the park have been sweetened by the frost. Yesterday morning, boys boating down the river saw along a sandbar, when the fog lifted at daylight, the first flock of Canadian geese.

The unknown author of *Beowulf* sang of "the seasons glory-bright that ever hold to the times set them." Yet with what irregular rhythm, with what

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capricious passages of reminiscence as well as prophecy the prairie autumn unfolds her symphony. One September day in 1805, Pike, journeying up the Great River beyond the "Tête des Morts," recorded temperature of over ninety-nine degrees. In the same neighborhood, a century later we drove through blinding heat and clouds of dust to find the poet's grave at Hazel Green. In Western Kansas, even in mid-November, those loving comfort may often wisely choose the shady side of the street. I have seen heat-lightning flash across the starry October sky, and have heard the honking of wild geese, on a dark night, followed at once by a vigorous clap of thunder. The prairie annals of November include many a tragedy of lightning stroke and of cyclonic wind.

With what tenderness—or is it mockery?—, with what faint, reluctant touch, October, when she chooses, recalls the melodies of March and April! Under the golden foliage one hears, and hardly hears, as in the echoes of a dream, the hesitating preludes of the ruby-crowned kinglet and the white-throated sparrow, the half-forgotten love-notes of the flicker; once surely, by all the books, a phantom strain from the gray-cheeked thrush. Even the croaking of a frog, in the autumn twilight, seems weird, remote from reality. But the "second spring" of which we sometimes hear, probably refers to flowers rather than to birds or quadrupeds. The lilac hedge along the campus border and the orchard apple-trees may

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blossom with the goldenrod as well as with anemones. Even on October days, one may find a Kansas honeysuckle-bush in bloom or gather violets beside the asters on Missouri hills.

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!" Mellow to touch and taste in peaches, plums, and grapes; and mellow to the sight in a hundred shades of ripened grain and fruit. Early in the autumn, the wheat and flax are still waving in great fields south of the Saskatchewan and the meadowlarks are perching on the oat-shocks in western Nebraska. (Kansas wheat has been cut in October.) The buckwheat fields are gleaming white under the moonlight in southern Minnesota. Soon the yellow corn appears in boarded wagon or latticed crib or in heaps beside the barnyard over a vast area of the prairie. The nuts on hazel-bush and walnut tree are waiting for the Saturday excursion, and the bittersweet is brought from many a woodland to grace the parlor mantel. To imagination, what wealth is offered in the ungathered harvest of the brown pods of Indian mallow, milkweeds, jimson-weed, Kentucky coffee-tree, and Spanish bayonet; of the reddish fruits of sumac, mountain ash and buck-bush; of the dark, green globes among the osage thorns. From the poetic reverie beside the slough, one returns, alas, with garments decorated by abundant burs and Spanish needles—"stick-tights" in very truth!

The fruitfulness of autumn in a wider sense is seen among the birds. Six in a family row the blue-

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birds perch along the wire; the swallows congregate in tens or hundreds, whether in Chicago park or on a country road beside the pond. At dusk, innumerable swifts circle about the chimney and the blackbirds sweep down upon the maples in an avalanche of darkness, far from silent. The farmer watches his covey of prairie chickens against the village hunter; and young warblers of a score of migrant species follow the path of the ancestral choice, southward.

Each season nature, between the prelude and finale of her sequence, plays melodies of death. Some quicken the sense of tragedy in all generous hearts; some are so faint or so familiar they reach the sentimentalist alone. Some perhaps have qualities of humor. One mid-September day, as we rambled about Fort Leavenworth, over sentry and commissary wagon, over barracks and stables rested a veil of smoke from the forest blazing far north on the borders of the Great Lake. Over a thousand leagues of the prairie itself in September, October, November, fires destroy grasses, grain in the stack, corn in the field; not rarely they threaten farmhouse and village.

Sooner or later the flowers pass. No patient search discovers even a golden-rod or aster in bloom. The blazing star, the trumpet-weed, gentian and lobelia, the poppy mallow that flamed on the dry prairie and the delicate white *stenosiphon* that nodded on the gravelly hill—all are fading memories. Soon-

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er or later the song of the summer birds has passed. In September one may possibly hear a vireo sing in Minnesota or a catbird sing, faint-heartedly, in Kansas. The robin may defer farewell until November, but farewell then it is for three long months.

In one form or another autumnal death comes to many a bird and insect, reptile and quadruped. Walking by the bank of the river one sees the rigid little body of a sandpiper; in the local paper one reads of a great white pelican or a golden eagle shot in a neighboring county. In Iowa, the Indians from the Reservation pass through "our town" for the annual squirrel hunt; and from the sluggish Hawkeye sloughs the turtles migrate to the eastern markets. Countless citizens of prairie commonwealths obey primeval instinct, and by hundreds or by thousands, coons, opossums, rabbits, jack-rabbits, squirrels, quails, and prairie chickens pass to their final rest. Some chilly morning one notices the stiff form of a katydid or a monarch butterfly beside the walk, and in the days that follow, many a corpse of butterfly, cicada, wasp, and beetle, though the crickets still may chirp on sunny days.

Sooner or later arrives the first direct, emphatic challenge of winter—cold wind from the north, early morning frost withering the vines in the garden, a fringe of ice about the pool, or snow on lingering asters. A long interval may pass before the main advance but the earliest herald demands an answer. The responses of man and nature are ready: flight,

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or battle, or deeds of faith in the spring of another year.

For flight, the monarch butterflies have gathered along the maples, the Franklin gulls circle in great hosts above the North Dakota prairie, the blackbirds move in mass some fifteen thousand strong above the Kansas campus. From the warblers, thrushes, sparrows, we hear an *ave atque vale* as they pass. The railways leading to the far southeast and far southwest call with a pleading voice, "Come to the lands where it is always summer." Who knows? The prairie winter may be open; or may be bitter cold and snow bound month after month. From Minneapolis to San Diego, from Lincoln to Saint Augustine, from Madison to Phoenix, from prairie farmstead to Hawaii, or the Isle of Pines, they migrate; gray-haired and feeble folk or lively youngsters, eager for tennis in December and bathing in the January surf. Others pass southward in a manner more plebeian but far more picturesque, allied more closely to the genius of the prairie. One or two at a time the wagons roofed with canvas and oilcloth lumber along the roads. Smoke drifts away from a fragmentary stovepipe. A frail, well-bundled woman and wide-eyed children peer out from their front door. Household goods are lashed by ropes to the rear end of the wagon; a dog skulks beneath and a cow, uncurried, follows patiently.

But the stay-at-homes far outnumber those who flee. White as the falling snow, great rabbits of the

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western plains leap before the wind. The prairie dogs and wood-chucks creep into their burrows for a lengthy sleep; the squirrel nests loom large in the leafless maples. The storks stand in the meadow waiting for the cattle, though the pasturing on the campus closes with November. In South Dakota we have seen, brought in for winter feeding, six thousand sheep and more in one great flock. At a distance they were like the snowless fields in color and the very prairie seemed in motion. A wagon creaks into the lawyer's yard, bringing a cord of seasoned oak for the fireplace in the parlor. A wagon creaks through the farmyard gate loaded with coal for the kitchen stove. On the southern prairies, courteous monopolies report an ample flow of gas. On the cellar floor stand the barrels of winter apples, and on the shelves above are many goodly jars of cherries, peaches, strawberries, and plums. The grapevines are trimmed in the arbor and the raspberry bushes are mulched in the garden; the tender house-plants, potted, flourish by a sunny window. Skates, double-runner, furs, mackinaw, and overcoat are ready. Let it come!

As if we might still waver, the snowy egrets sometimes visit us in early fall—children of the south, 'most dainty and most graceful of the herons'. "Brief is our sojourn in this land of lesser beauty" —so they say to fancy—"come and follow us." But for those of us who stay, there will be bird companions through the winter months; a group of year-

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long residents and pilgrims from the north. The winter wren will duck and dive along the osage hedge; dark mite of animation, almost a pigmy, but with a voice that wins applause. The juncoes will not fail to flit in the evergreens and the tree sparrows will surely feed among the weeds in the slough or along the slope of the hill. One year or another, we shall see the red-polls, the siskins, and the great northern shrike. Some years ago a numerous flock of evening grosbeaks was reported at Des Moines, in September—birds, by the book, at home in far-off Manitoba and beyond.

Triumphant themes of autumn follow: in human nature, faith in the steadfast rhythm of the seasons; in plant and animal, obedience to the laws of life. The seed corn, chosen carefully, hangs from the attic rafters. Before the harvest is complete, wide acres of rich, black, prairie soil are newly furrowed for the sun and rain. Green foliage adorns the sandbar willows by the southern streams until the neighboring fields are tinted green by winter wheat. The winter buds are swelling on the maples and cottonwoods, that yesterday were clad in crimson and gold. The botanist describes their "thick, ovate bright red outer scales," their "inner scales, pubescent on the inner surface." The rhymster whispers to himself:

"Autumn flame is flickering,
But on the leafless maple bough

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The buds are promises that Spring
Shall win a garland for her brow."

In the nourishing tissues of sheltered farmyard animals, of wild quadrupeds escaping from the sleet in the remote hollows of the pasture, by day and night develop the embryonic forms toward conscious creatures to be born in March and April. The snow has covered the grass seed on the lawn, the seeds of herb and shrub and tree by slough and pond and lake and river, by meadow and upland, by coteau, sandhill, mound and bluff. The chrysalis is coated with ice.

But beyond—the hours when "winter is away and fair is earth's bosom."

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## Inland Waters

By William Ellery Leonard

(Set to music by Louis Adolph Coerne)

### I. IN TWILIGHT

Moon in the west,
O'er hill and golden cloud and river,
What would I pray thee give her?—
Give her thy rest.

Star on the slope,
O'er wave and wand'ring sail and twilight:
What would I pray of thy light?—
Give her thy hope.

### II. THE BELLS ARE RINGING FAR AWAY
(Canoe Song)

In low canoe by willow trees,
Amid the rushes by a boulder,
My paddle blade across my knees,
The moon behind my lady's shoulder:
"The bells are ringing far away."

Across the hills the cattle come,
The little steamer rounds the cove,
And twilight calls the children home
Along the pathway of the grove:
"The bells are ringing far away."

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And if my paddle I must swing,
Now back again along the shore,
O love, you'll still have time to sing
To lake and moon and me once more:
"The bells are ringing far away."

## III. DRIFTING AT MIDNIGHT

Just to be drifting, drifting,
Out with the stars afloat,
As the waters are lifting, lifting,
Gently my little boat,
And the shadowy trees are shifting,
And the land-bird wails its note.

Love, you are dreaming, dreaming,
Yonder at home by the pine,
But your eyes they are gleaming, gleaming,
Here through the star-dust on mine,
And the peace of the midnight is teeming
With eery things and divine.

## IV. BY LAND AND WATER

My pony is hid in a hollow
(Up there with the thrush and the lark),
And whatever good riders may follow,
May they get to the inn before dark! . . .
I've a bank in the shade at the end of the glade—
Hark, hark!

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Her boat in the cat-tails is hiding
(Down there with the turtle and quail),
And wherever her sisters be riding,
May the sunset be gold on the sail! . . .
She's coming in white, through the birches, alight—
Hail! Hail!

## V. WILLOW WALK

Lean across the rail, love, lean and look below,
See the swampy waters by the rushes glow,
And a thousand froggies, all in pea-green jacket!—
What a—what a, what a—what a,
What a, what a racket!

Lounge along the rail, love, lounge and look ahead,
See the scraggly willows, round the wharf and shed,
And a hundred black-birds, with the scarlet shoulder!—
Cheep and chirp, O! cheep and chirp, O!
Till the year is older!

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## Long—Short—and a Long

By Ival McPeak

Mrs. Perrin was telephoning.

Party line gossip was to her what golf and stamp collecting and raising fancy chickens and writing poetry are to less talkative folk. Ben Showers, the Maple Grove correspondent for the weekly *Sentinel,* thanked her in silence many times for his half column of personal items. She was truly a match for the most enterprising society reporter. And it was also true that she was not above taking a doubtful rumor for an authentic "tip" and publishing it abroad as news. Then when her stories appeared in little paragraphs in the columns of the *Sentinel,* she felt herself vindicated, and called up everybody on the line to say so.

At this particular moment her victim was Mrs. Mather. As usual, she smoothed the path to an important bit of news by some aimless gossip.

"Looks like snow," she began.

"Yes, we got to expect that by this time," came back over the line from the patient Mrs. Mather.

"Well, we ain't had none to speak of yet. It won't seem like Christmas if it don't snow."

"I don't suppose so."

"Say, are you folks goin' over to the Christmas tree at the schoolhouse? Myron and Jessie are just crazy about it."

"Oh, we might if Fred wants to drive over."

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"But John'll be back by that time, won't he? Or maybe he don't care about them things any more. When's he coming?"

"He ought to be here sometime this forenoon. Fred drove down to the depot to meet him."

"My," sighed Mrs. Perrin, "it don't seem but yesterday when he was just a little codger running around. Let's see, how long's he been living with you?"

"I took him to raise just after his mother died; that's been about twenty-five years ago, I guess."

"I remember her well, but I didn't know his father. He died 'fore we moved here."

There was a little pause, then Mrs. Perrin came to the point with the adroitness of a prosecuting attorney.

"Say, when's he and that Hamilton girl going to get married?"

"What Hamilton girl?" There was mild interest in Mrs. Mather's voice.

"Why, Elsie Hamilton, Jake Hamilton's girl. He's going to move to California in a month or two and I supposed she and John'd get married before that. Hasn't he said anything to you about it?"

"No."

"Well, that's funny. I heard he'd been going with her while she was in Chicago studying music. John's been in Chicago, hasn't he?"

"Yes, a little over a year," came the unsuggestive reply.

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"Well, that's funny," reiterated Mrs. Perrin. "I've been hearing it all over. But then you'll find out when he comes."

"I suppose so." Mrs. Mather was exasperatingly indifferent. Clearly it would do no good to pry into this matter any longer, so Mrs. Perrin sought a graceful exit by ten or fifteen minutes chatter about less important neighborhood happenings. Finally Mrs. Mather said, with a peculiar little catch in her voice:

"I guess you'll have to excuse me, Mrs. Perrin. I smell the beans burning."

"All right, good-by."

"Good-by."

All that Mrs. Perrin knew about the engagement of John and Elsie was the fragment of a conversation which she had overheard on another line. Now she imagined that Mrs. Mather's answers had been a little evasive. Perhaps by calling up Elsie herself —not that she would own up to anything,—but even the tone of a voice or a meaningful silence will tell a story to a good reporter.

Jake Hamilton's had to be reached through "central," and it required two or three ringings and some long waiting before a girl's voice eventually sounded a "hello" in the receiver.

"Hello, this you, Elsie? This's Mrs. Perrin speaking."

"Yes, this is Elsie."

"Well, I haven't seen any of you folks for a long time. What's your pa and ma doing?"

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"Oh, ma's finishing up some baking, and pa's out by the barns some place. We're going to have some real Christmas weather, aren't we?"

"I should say so. I was just telling Mrs. Mather that it wouldn't seem like Christmas if it didn't snow."

"By the way, how is Mrs. Mather feeling? I heard she was getting worse the last week."

Mrs. Perrin joyously grabbed an opportunity.

"Oh, she's all right again. She ain't had a bad spell for a long time. I suppose you knew her grandson was coming home for the holidays; John, I mean."

"John?" The innocent surprise in Elsie's voice irritated Mrs. Perrin a bit, but she continued amiably:

"Yes, he's a lawyer in Chicago, you know. You got acquainted with him there this last year, didn't you?"

For a minute there was no response from the girl, and Mrs. Perrin held her breath in an uneasy suspense. Then came the answer:

"Why, I don't seem to place him at all. You see, we haven't lived here for nearly fourteen years, and so—"

"But you must have gone to Maple Grove school together," persisted her inquisitor. "You probably have forgotten him since you was a kid."

"Since you mention it now, I believe I do remember seeing him at school. I had just started to go

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before we moved to Oklahoma. And come to think of it, we used to play together when father chopped wood near his grandmother's house."

"Well, he's quite a man by this time, and gettin' along fine, so they say." She bit her lips nervously once or twice, then added: "I hear he's going to be married during the holidays. I wondered if you'd heard anything about it."

"No, this is the first time I've heard about him at all since I came back from Chicago." A slight pause, then: "Mrs. Perrin, do you know where we can borrow a hand cornsheller?"

"Why—let's see—." The fact was that Mrs. Perrin was not thinking about cornshellers at all. She knew only that Elsie had suddenly changed the subject: a good piece of incriminating evidence. There was no more need to cross-question John's fiancée.

"Father wants to shell some corn for the cows, just enough to last us till we move away, and it isn't worth while to hire a big machine."

By this time Mrs. Perrin had regained control of herself.

"Why, the only ones—let's see—yes, Mathers is the only ones around here that's got one."

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Perrin, we'll call them up about it. Father's got to have it right away."

When Mrs. Perrin rang off, her puckery mouth lengthened out in a jubilant smile. Two old play-

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mates from Maple Grove, one a prominent lawyer, the other an accomplished musician, meeting in Chicago, coming home separately, and surprising people by a holiday wedding—had Perry township ever known the like? There remained no doubt of its truth. Elsie's artful ignorance, her sudden desire to change the topic of conversation, the guilty hesitancy of her replies—plainly perceived in spite of the indistinctness and farawayness of voices on another party line: these were as convincing as a marriage certificate. For the next half hour the telephone receiver was glued to her ears, and those whom she didn't call up listened at their 'phones and heard the news.

While these glad tidings concerning John Mather were being published abroad, a team of fat grays were plodding their way over a hilly crooked road that led past brown meadows, yellow stubble fields, and scattered patches of timber. The team was driven by a man in a fur overcoat, who was addressed as "Uncle Fred" by his shivering companion in the open buggy. John was robust enough in his own way; he pretended not to notice the sharp coldness of the air; nevertheless, riding in taxis and street-cars had not trained him for a five-mile jaunt over rough roads in December.

It had been a year since he had taken this same drive. His last summer vacation had been spent in New England visiting some of his mother's relatives

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whom he had never seen before. But this was the real homecoming! The L-shaped white house and the unpainted barns and sheds in the distance were the only home he could remember. And his grandmother, his only living relative save numerous uncles, aunts, and cousins, had taken the place of father and mother and his other grandparents since John's early boyhood. He loved her with the child's peculiar spontaneous affection for his grandparents and the sturdy devotion of a man of the world for his mother.

The lazy grays picked their way carefully up to the top of the last hill where the frosty December wind blew stingingly in the faces of the men.

"Just the same old neck of the woods." John's voice shook with the cold.

"Yeh, things don't change much 'round here, only they're cutting off the timber considerable," came the matter-of-fact response.

"Gee, it's great to get back."

This brief bit of sentiment brought a half-sympathetic grin from Uncle Fred. Neither spoke again until the buggy rattled into the barnyard.

"You run in and get warm, I'll unhitch and feed," said his uncle.

John hesitated, feeling that he should help, but a cutting, sweeping gale whistled past, and he changed his mind. He got his suitcase and all the packages he could find in the buggy and ran to the back porch. He had just enough breath left to shout "hello" as he burst into the kitchen.

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"Well, you did get here at last."

With this informal greeting his grandmother reached out a thin, wrinkled hand, and when she had kissed him, John felt completely and comfortably at home again.

"Now, don't stand around here in my way," she went on with affected irritation, "take your things in the other room. There's a fire in the heater."

John did take his things into the other room, but he came back, and between the talking and trying to warm himself at the cookstove, he got in the way constantly while she was taking the beans out of the oven, and making the gravy, and taking up the potatoes and meat. But he was so busy with the homelike fun of everything, that she might have poured the gravy into the baked beans or taken up the potatoes with a carving knife for all he knew. Not that he wasn't hungry, but like other menfolk he concentrated his attention on the smell of things and the lay-out on the table. Then Fred came in, slamming the door against a puff of wind.

"Dinner ready?" he called out.

"Yes, as soon as you get washed," came from Mrs. Mather, her face half-hidden in the steam from the coffee pot as she poured in some more water. Then she took up the conversation with John where it had been interrupted:

"Well, Mrs. Perrin called me up—"

"Now, ma, why don't you tell him something he don't know?" grunted Fred, as he wriggled out of his heavy fur coat.

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"Yes, I remember," observed John, "she has been known to use the telephone before."

"Well, she beat around the bush a while, and then she says, 'When's John and that Hamilton girl going to get married?' I told her I hadn't heard anything about it, but she kinda insisted it was so, and I suppose she's told everyone on the line about it by this time."

"So, she would thrust on me a wife. Well, you tell her that John Mather is still thoroughly unmarried, and likely to be so for a good while yet."

"She'll call you up about it," laughed Fred in his genial cynicism, "I bet you won't get through dinner before she'll be after you." He gave a final jerk of the comb in his matted black hair, and then they all sat down to freshly killed pork and boiled potatoes and baked beans and pumpkin pie, and John ate ravenously after the manner of city people when they get free of the boarding house and the formality of the dinner party.

"You leave that Mrs. Perrin to me," he went on, "I've dealt with newspaper reporters a little myself. You say Elsie's been in Chicago this last year?"

"Yes," answered his grandmother. "Her folks sent her to Chicago a couple of years before they moved back from Oklahoma. She stayed with some relative there, I guess, and took singing lessons of Feisler or Meisler—something like that."

"I remember her when she was a kid," said John reminiscently. "She used to come with her father

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when he chopped wood over across the road. So she's training up her voice a little."

"I guess she won't go back there, though. Her folks are going to move to California sometime in February, and she'll probably go along with them."

"That old Jake Hamilton never could stay in one place," querulously spoke up Fred. "Seems like he always made money, though."

John did not comment on this. He was wondering to himself if a freckled-faced little girl with pigtail braids and dirty drown hands would grow better-looking when she had arrived in the later teens—or maybe it was the early twenties. He remembered now that she had come to Maple Grove school a few days, after which he had seen her no more. That was probably the time when Jake Hamilton had gone south.

"When did the Hamiltons move back from Oklahoma?" he inquired.

"Sometime this spring early," said Mrs. Mather.

Kr-r-r-r-r-ling ling! came from the other room.

"There she is," laughed Fred hilariously at the fulfillment of his prophecy. "You jest as well answer it, John."

His grandmother, however, went to the 'phone. In a few minutes she returned.

"It wasn't Mrs. Perrin. It was the Hamiltons; they want to borrow our hand cornsheller, and they're coming down this afternoon for it. Mrs. Hamilton said that Mrs. Perrin called them up, and they found out from her—"

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"By golly! Is there anything around here she ain't got her hand in?" This time Fred revelled in a paroxysm of laughter.

"Tut, tut!" admonished Mrs. Mather. "Mrs. Perrin ain't such a bad neighbor as you make her out."

After dinner the wind died down and the frostiness of the air was a little more bearable. John went out-doors with Fred and helped in his own awkward way at fixing a hog fence back of the barns. In spite of a borrowed pair of warm mittens, John's fingers grew stiff with the cold, and he stopped now and then to slap them back to warmth. It was while engaged in this that he saw a team and wagon drive into the yard.

"It's the Hamiltons," said Fred in answer to John's look. A man of fifty, his black cow-hide overcoat unbuttoned and flapping about in the wind, got down from the seat, and a girl, bundled in furs and scarfs, took his hand and jumped down after him.

"Why, hello, John." Hamilton took John's hand in a powerful grip. "Don't remember old Jake Hamilton, hey? This's my daughter, Elsie, John."

So this was the girl whose name had been linked with his through the garrulous Mrs. Perrin! Her cheeks were red with the cold—there were a few freckles left—and the wisps of light brown hair that crept out from under the edge of a neat velvet toque didn't look at all like the pig-tail braids of wood-chopping days.

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"Pleased to meet you," he responded out of habit, then he recovered himself. "I guess we've met before—up in that old woodchoppers' shanty that used to be across the road."

"Yes," she rejoined, "and we went to school together, oh, about a week, just before we moved away."

"Now, you folks run in and get warm," broke in Fred's voice; "we'll load this sheller."

"Can't I help?" inquired John hypocritically.

"No, we'll manage all right," said Hamilton. "I'll come in after you, Elsie."

The two fled to the house where Grandma made them sit down by the big air-tight heater. John poked up the fire and put in another chunk of wood, and felt a queer sort of joy in doing this little service for the girl who had come back so suddenly into his world. They talked about everything from their old bewhiskered schoolmaster at Maple Grove to the interior furnishings of Herr Feisler's Chicago studio. Mrs. Mather stayed with them a while and filled in gaps in the conversation, but the gaps grew smaller and smaller, and she went out into the kitchen and bothered around at imaginary tasks until Hamilton and Fred came in to warm themselves. Then followed a half hour of neighborhood talk in which neither Elsie nor John was interested, so they communed in undertones. And Elsie blushed tantalizingly when John told her how much better-looking she had grown since she was—she was—let's see—

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"Oh, you'll have to figure that out for yourself, if you don't know," she put in playfully.

After a while a voice that was Hamilton's said something about bringing back the cornsheller in a few days.

"Well, father's ready," said Elsie, "I'll have to be going. Can't you come up while you're back?"

Come up? Well, rather! He told her right then and there he was coming—how about to-morrow afternoon? And she smiled as she bade him get up in time for dinner and spend the day.

John was not much of a self-analyst, but as he watched the girl and her father disappear around the bend of the road on their way home, he was conscious that the equilibrium of things had been pleasantly upset. With splendid self-control he tried to appraise the net value of all that had just happened. Elsie had become in the space of an hour as completely a part of these surroundings as if she had been with him here these last fourteen years. He wondered at her having been so cordial, and he wondered whether he had taken too much advantage of her good-humor. He was wondering over these and many other questions when his grandmother called him into the house.

"Mrs. Perrin wants to talk with you," she announced.

He took up the receiver with a jerk of impatience and did to her what he had done on one or two occasions to certain reporters whom he had encountered

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in Chicago. He denied everything firmly, gracefully, tactfully, so tactfully that Mrs. Perrin soon found something else to talk about.

"Did Hamiltons get a cornsheller of you folks? They was wantin' to borrow one."

"Yes, they just left five minutes ago." Suddenly —just for an instant—he felt that he had been a trifle ungrateful. It was through her—. Then, as he rang off, he smiled scornfully at himself for this unmanly contrition, and went out to the barns where Fred was nailing the last board on the hog fence.

The air was heavy with the prophecy of snow. Soon a few flakes floated down hesitatingly, then they came swifter until the woods across the river became a blurred patch of gray. The fall threatened to grow heavier toward evening, so Fred milked earlier than usual. John stood in the doorway of the stuffy cow-shed, and through the thickening swirl he imagined how Michigan Avenue looked now with its long wide carpet of white and its giant walls of brick half lost in the storm, like the wooded hills across the river. At night snow-sprinkled crowds would pour out of theaters and cabarets; myriads of taxis would plow through the blinding storm, while the piercing arc-lights and a million of their lesser brethren would glare bravely through it all and add to the animation and gaiety of the big up-town.

But here there was a silence and a hush—a hush that was only a prelude to the high carnival of winter. There would be dazzling forest palaces of frost

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and snow, shining ice avenues and bevies of skaters, and sleighing parties and cornpoppings and taffy-pullings. And in Chicago, well, there were always receptions and banquets and theater parties and dinners. And John asked himself which of these two worlds he liked the better.

This question naturally concerned Lucile, too. She was the daughter of his elder partner, the man who had taken him in fresh from law school. It was the first time he had thought of her that day. And with an uncomfortable surprise he realized that she didn't fit into this world at all. Elsie belonged here, and was she not also a part of his city? However that might be, it was clearly time that he should be shaking himself out of the dreams that had come with the quietness of the storm. He turned back into the shed where Fred was milking.

The next forenoon he hitched up Doll, one of the gray mares that had brought him from the railway station, and drove up to Hamiltons'. It had stopped snowing and the sun shone blindingly on the unbroken roadway. Doll was restless in the crisp, frosty air, so that when he yelled "giddap," she lunged forward, kicking the powdery snow into his face. Around the bend of the road by the river, up a long narrow highway through level bottom land, over hills and through gray woods he drove, all the while stamping his feet and slapping first one hand then the other on his knees to keep warm. Finally he raced Doll across a long iron river bridge and up

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the hill where stood a rambling white house with green shutters.

Once inside, with Elsie taking his overcoat and cap and pulling a chair up to the fire for him, he felt himself almost as much at home as he had down at his grandmother's. But it wasn't long before Hamilton came tramping into the room and insisted on taking John all through his barns and sheds where he talked endlessly about how much this and that would bring at the sale in February. John was politely interested and dutifully asked questions, but with the realization that his vacation lasted only until New Year's, he was profoundly irritated at wasting so much time in this fashion. When they did get back to the house, dinner was ready.

John marvelled how absolutely just right Elsie looked in a long kitchen apron. The traditions of his city fled far into his subconscious self, for when she wore the apron at the dinner table and went over to the stove once or twice to get the coffee-pot, he swore to himself that it was altogether fitting that she do these things. He must have stared at her a little too much for she blushed once with a slight hint of impatience, or was the cookstove too hot? He waxed quite indifferent, however, and did not even look in her direction for a full three minutes.

After dinner they all sat around in the best room and talked about crops and politics and California and law practice and music. Elsie played and sang with the formality befitting the presence of "company".

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But when her father went outdoors to see to some cornshelling, and her mother departed into the kitchen to wash the dishes and sweep, Elsie sang for him and talked about her studies with a comradelike informality that delighted him. He couldn't remember the names of all the songs, but there were three that strove to hum themselves over in his memory days afterward: *Elsa's Dream* from *Lohengrin*, *Heilige Nacht* (where had he heard that before?), and an old Provençal love song, new to him, but seeming to say just what he felt at that moment toward this wonderful girl at the piano. It was incredible that such music should be heard in Maple Grove.

John suddenly realized that the twilight was closing around them. In some way he tore himself loose from the easy chair, and with much self-torture refused cordial invitations to stay for supper. He departed into the freezing, unfriendly out-of-doors to hitch up Doll.

"Come again," shouted Hamilton jovially, as he drove out of the yard.

All the way home Doll was left to take her time, for little things like the cold and the coming darkness could not break through the walls of a dream he was building. He did not say to himself in so many words that he was in love, but he was allowing himself to imagine that here in flesh and blood was the woman whom he should take back with him to Chicago. She could go on with her music—

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He was rounding the last bend of the road, and Doll, in sight of home, broke into a brisk trot. Then shamefacedly he realized that the white house and barns looked not quite as home-like as they had before, and not being a self-analyst, he could not understand his treason. That night he lay awake devising and discarding a score of plans, all of which had nothing to do with the huge pile of business that was waiting for him in the office of Sage and Mather.

The morning brought sobriety and reaction. Critically he looked himself over, and decided that he had either been dreaming or making a fool of himself. To love a girl after seeing her only twice—the schoolhouse and wood-chopping days didn't count—was to John Mather a folly out of a story-book. The reasonable soul, the attorney-at-law soul of him could not admit this. He was glad when Uncle Fred asked him if he wanted to go rabbit hunting. A brisk encounter with the keen, frosty atmosphere, lungfulls of clean, invigorating air, and a body-tiring tramp through miles of woods would settle him back into his proper place soon enough. They set out right after dinner. The whitened limbs of the trees were dazzling in the sun, and stray clouds passing over threw giant fleeting shadows across the white floor of the woods. They tore through brushwood, and in the cleared places and fields looked for the tracks of the rabbits. Occasionally the bang of a shot-gun echoed down the aisles of the forest. John threw himself into the sport with all the will power he possessed.

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He had lost all sense of location, so devious had been their path. Hence, he was not prepared for the surprise that met him when they dropped down into an oval flat strip of country, a sort of amphitheater. On the crest of one of the hills stood the rambling white house with the green shutters. He drew in his breath quickly with an on-rush of feeling, and for the rest of the day he could not shoot within an arm's-length of the most accessible rabbit. He returned with his uncle to the house, his crude attempt at reasoning himself out overpowered by a desire which seemed to have established itself as the one genuine thing in his life.

As he walked into the house, his grandmother was hanging up the receiver of the telephone.

"You look tired out, grandma," he remarked. "You must have been having a session with Mrs. Perrin."

She laughed. "Yes, she is the worst one to talk and talk. I had to tell her the potatoes were boiling over."

John took off his cap and borrowed corduroy jacket, and dropped into a rocking-chair by the stove.

"Mrs. Perrin wanted to know if you was going to the Christmas tree at the schoolhouse."

"Oh, I don't know as I'd care—" Then a strange look came into his eyes, and he amended his answer. "Say, I believe I will. When is it?"

"The night before Christmas," answered his grandmother.

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She went out into the kitchen, and he hastened to the 'phone and called up Elsie. Faintly and far-away someone said "hello."

"Hello, is this you, Elsie?"

"Yes, who—"

"Well, this is John Mather talking. I wondered if you'd like to go to the Christmas tree at the school-house to-morrow night."

"Surely, I'd be glad to. I haven't seen an old-fashioned tree for a long time."

Then they both rivalled Mrs. Perrin by talking a good while about commonplace nothings.

Before that Christmas Eve, John had believed that such nights existed only in paintings and *Chambers' Encyclopedia of Family Poetry.* The moonlight, the jingling of the sleigh-bells, the laughing crowd, and the tree with its many candles and glittering baubles and sacks of candy and nuts were all there, but to him they were mere accessories to the joy-giving personality of Elsie. It was only natural and proper that such things should surround her. Hence he took a proprietary interest in all that went on; so much so that a few of that countryside changed their opinion about city folks being "stuck up."

He spent all of Christmas Day at home. A person known as "Uncle Joe", with a numerous progeny of assorted ages, came down from "up North", also Aunt Lizzie with her husband and one spoiled and petted boy. But all these made the most lonesome

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houseful that John had ever known. He was glad to see everybody, of course, yet all the time he imagined how incomplete the circle was, after all.

He waited two days before he made bold to call at Hamiltons' again, and it might have been two years, so glad he was to get back and find that Elsie was as cordial and jolly and desirable as ever. She sang *Elsa's Dream* and *Heilige Nacht* again for him, and—to be sure, the simple Provençal love song.

"I like that," he affirmed. "It seems—well, it seems just right."

Some of the prudence, some of the judiciousness, that found most of its use in Chicago, kept him from saying just what he wanted to about that song.

Inexorably, as before, came the twilight, and the hitching up, and the driving away, not without the promise, however, that he would call once more before he left.

"Once more." A sort of inner uneasiness compelled him to say the words to himself while the cutter creaked over the unevenly packed and polished snow tracks. Suddenly his promise took on a new and tremendous meaning. Once more—only once, the day before New Year's probably. And what would he do then? Could he ask a woman to be his wife, when he had known her only a week? The cold-blooded conventional in him answered "No." A weakening shiver went through him, and something about the desolate dusk of the winter day made his vacation romance fade into the unreality of a silly, impossible dream.

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Then the resourcefulness of the attorney began to assert itself. Perhaps he could extend his vacation two or three days—a week. He could plead sickness, other business, anything. He would plan some way.

When he had reached home, his grandmother handed him a letter, a letter that made new wrinkles come into his forehead. He must surely get back by the first of January. A new county court case, and two or three probate jobs, and that Brampton appeal business had come in suddenly and the office was stacked up with work.

The little hope of a longer vacation died on the spot. And with that Brampton appeal case, there would be no getting away again until the spring, and by that time Elsie would be far away in California. The tone of the letter reminded him, too, that Sage had granted even this one week grudgingly. Three more days, one more visit, three or four more hours: these figures made vast wreckage in the way of sleepless nights and fretful daytimes and a menacing chaos of indecision. His grandmother asked him if he wasn't feeling well. A card came from Lucile, and he wished himself back in Chicago where his perplexity would melt away in the white heat of competition.

Nevertheless, on the afternoon of the last day of the old year he started out for Hamiltons', feeling very much as if he were attending a funeral.

"Giddap, Doll!" But Doll missed the vim and vigor in the voice of a few days ago, and she kept on

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at her old gentle pace. Another storm was threatening; a suffocating quietness lay on everything. It was not wholly unlike the intellectual numbness that was settling down upon John—just heavily enough so that when he again beheld the white house on the hill he had not quite lost the power of behaving correctly in the rôle of the social caller.

Looking once more on Elsie brought back the full strength of his desire and at the same time impressed him with the uselessness of it. The result was precisely nothing. He laughed and talked and complimented Elsie on her music, but he was a mere machine turning out words, while his real self had given up hope and refused to be a part of what he was doing.

After all—he thought of this while Elsie talked about California—wouldn't it be the proper thing to give all his attention to the building up of business, then in the due course of time choose some woman of his own circle, Lucile, for instance? The glamour of this vacation would wear off in the midst of sanity and business and prosperity. And Lucile was quite a congenial soul; she understood his work, too.

The dusk was creeping into the room; on cloudy winter days the twilight comes early. As John looked at Elsie she seemed to grow into and become a part of the gathering shadows like the profile of some grand, inaccessible lady in the dark background of a Rembrandt. And what right had he to talk

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about love to this woman? Their childhood intimacies had been so few, and had been disposed of so quickly in their first conversation, that they could not signify much now. She had risen to be the woman of the world, the woman who had studied under Feisler in Chicago, the woman who would meet men and grow to love one of them in the approved fashion of the world. After these holiday pleasantries everybody would go back to work; talking of love would only spoil the satisfying memories of it all.

Kr-r-r-rling ling kr-r-r-ling!

"Long-short-and a long, that's our ring," spoke up Elsie. She went through the door of the dining room to answer it. John could not help hearing every word of what she said.

"Oh, hello, Mrs. Perrin."

. . . .

"Yes."

. . . .

"Oh, fine."

. . . .

"Wh-wh-a-at?"

. . . .

"Ye-s-s, he's here."

. . . .

"All right."

. . . .

"John, Mrs. Perrin wants to talk with you."

"What—what in the world does she want with me?" But he went into the dining-room and took up the receiver wearily.

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"Hello, is this Mr. Mather?"

"Yes."

"Well, I suppose your vacation is pretty near up. When d'ye go back?"

"I'm going to try to catch the nine o'clock train to-morrow morning," he replied.

"Well, I got a piece of news to read to you. The *Sentinel* just came to-day, but your grandmother said she didn't take it. Maybe you can get a copy up where you are. I thought I'd read it to you anyway. Listen:

> 'Mr. John Mather is spending his vacation at the home of his grandmother, Mrs. Sarah Mather. He has come from Chicago, where he is one of the prominent attorneys of that city. He has also made many calls on friends in this neighborhood, among them, the Hamiltons, whose daughter, Elsie, has been in Chicago the last year taking vocal lessons. It is rumored that Mr. Mather will not return alone.'"

"That's interesting," spoke up John noncommittally.

"Now, will you try to squirm out of it, young man?"

"Oh, you can't believe everything in the *Sentinel*," he came back weakly.

"Well, congratulations; I don't want to keep you long," said the unconquerable Mrs. Perrin.

"Good-by." John hung up the receiver very slowly. He was wondering if Elsie had read that

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item yet. Of course, she had doubtless heard Mrs. Perrin's rumor long ago, but had treated it with a tactful disregard that might have proved the death of it. But now it was in the *Sentinel!* It had attained the dignity of news! There were many in Maple Grove who swore by the *Sentinel.* Why hadn't he called up Ben Showers, the correspondent?

As he walked through the door he could hear Elsie setting the lamp on the table and feeling in the rattly tin box for the matches.

"What's that in the *Sentinel*?" she asked. "Something about a prominent Chicago attorney on his vacation, I imagine. I must see it."

Some invisible necessity, some genius of emergency descended upon John Mather, and he felt strangely compelled to do something. He went over to the table, and laid a hand on her arm, not knowing exactly what was going to happen next.

"Never mind about that *Sentinel,*" he managed to say. "Wait, I want to tell you something. Maybe I'm crazy, but I'm speaking the truth, anyway."

Then he found himself saying and doing many things which he had dreamed of as wild and insane and improbable five minutes before.

At any rate, a quarter of an hour later, she had promised to get her father's permission to study music another year in Chicago.

"But," she persisted, "it would have been fun to—"

"Oh, we'll go to California, all right," he inter-

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rupted. "Next summer for our honeymoon. I can get away for a month then."

"Now, I want to see what that was in the *Sentinel.*" She went and got the paper.

" 'It is rumored that Mr. Mather will not return alone.' Oh, it's that Mrs. Perrin again. She gets a notion that something's about to happen or has happened, then Ben Showers hears it, and—"

"But wasn't she right?"

That seemed an unanswerable question, for they did not say anything at all for a minute, and when they did, it had nothing to do with such trivialities as Mrs. Perrin, or telephones, or cornshellers.

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# The Midland Chronicle

Two lyrics by Lewis Worthington Smith, *Aglavaine* and *Driftwood* appear in the September *Poetry*. The number leads out with Miss Amy Lowell's latest considerable work in "polyphonic prose", *Lead Soldiers*; Herman Hagedorn in *Fatherland* voices the emotional conflict of many foreign-born Americans in these days of the great war. Passionate intenseness is achieved by the use of precise and fitting imagery in Conrad Aiken's *Discordants*.

*A History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City*, by Jacob Van der Zee, and *The Legislation of the Thirty-sixth General Assembly of Iowa*, by Frank Edward Horack, are the leading articles in the October number of *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, which will appear shortly. An unusual amount of valuable bibliographical material is included in the issue.

With a book to review as a pretext Mr. Arthur Davison Ficke has written a fine little essay on William Blake which appears in *The Dial* for October 14. The essay is short, but effectively and sincerely accomplishes its purpose of presenting Blake as the "wreck of a great artist", and one able at times (in his lyrical poetry) to rank with Shelley and Milton. The essay is in Mr. Ficke's best prose, at once sinewy, vigorous and colorful.

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The Midland

A MAGAZINE OF THE MIDDLE WEST

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## Out of the Desert

By Willard Wattles

Out of this little and this nothingness
I will build slowly what cannot be effaced;
There shall come sound of iron hammers ringing
And groining arches like fingers interlaced;
Each youth a king who walks a common kingdom,
Clad in the seamless robe, with lifted head,
Each girl a queen, love's roses in her bosom,
Walking beside him with an equal tread.
I will set song upon the lips of singers
Who slumber still uncalled from out the dust,
I will light fires upon unnumbered altars,
Love shall be honest and justice shall be just.
I have not cried alone within the desert,
Ye go not out to find a broken reed;
I have clasped Him who walks the pillared darkness—
I have not wrestled with Him feeble-kneed.

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About my loins I gird a sword that flashes
With lightnings hidden in the marching cloud;
I break above your heads the awful tablets,
And fling the fragments to the wheeling crowd.
Out of such sowing shall come mighty reaping:
Hearts are the fields, and songs the seed I sow;
Ye shall not know until the time of harvest
What hand upheld me, but I know, I know.

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## Heart of Youth

By Walter J. Muilenburg.

The boy on the cultivator straightened as the horses walked from the soft, spongy ground of the corn-field to the firmer turf at the side of the road. He spoke sharply to the plodding team and turned the cultivator around, lowering the blades for another row. Then, when the horses had fallen into a slow walk, he slouched down, and with bent head watched the hills of young corn pass beneath him.

He could not have been more than sixteen or seventeen, for his eager eyes looked out from under soft lashes, and his face showed the smooth, healthy tan of a boy. His brown hands were so small that he could barely keep a firm grasp on the heavy levers. When he raised the blades, his fingers became streaked with red and the corners of his mouth

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drew back and grew hard with concentrated effort. Occasionally he tugged at the reins knotted about his shoulders, but, except for his low, abrupt commands to the horses, he was silent. At the end of the row he raised the shovels, got off the cultivator stiffly, and stretched himself out in the new spring grass of a little rise by the roadside.

All around him the world was full of soft color and light. Close by, in the sun the corn-field was a sea of shimmering green, while the more distant fields of grain were dark against the light ash of plowed land. Above, the sun shone slanting from the blue of an early June sky. The air, clean and clear, was already pervaded with the drowsy lassitude of noon.

The boy looked listlessly out over the long rows of corn still to be cultivated. Near at hand the young stalks seemed strong enough to win in their struggle toward the sun, but the distant corn lay like a filmy shadow of green on the black soil. Behind the cultivator, a flock of blackbirds fed in the fresh-turned earth. The boy watched them with half-shut eyes. When one of the birds had fed, it would hop upon a lump of wet, black earth, and being satisfied that it could eat no more, would skim in rapid, undulating flight to the row of willows in the next pasture. On a fence-post, a meadow-lark filled the silence with a liquid flow of music. As it laid back its head in an abandon of joy, the boy noticed how the sun accentuated the vivid splash of black on its yellow throat.

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The meadow-lark flew away. The boy got up and climbed listlessly into the cultivator seat. The tugs straightened and the horses walked again into the corn. One of the team, however, a heavy, powerful bay, lagged continually, at times almost stopping.

The cultivator slid sidewise, and the blades tore the corn out by the roots. The boy jerked the reins, slapping them over the horse's back. "Get along there, Jim!" he called. Jim pulled evenly for a moment, then lagged again. In sudden violence of anger, the boy pulled cruelly at the horse's mouth, cursing in low, abrupt sentences. The horse stopped, the blades slipped, again tearing up a hill of corn. From sheer rage the boy was silent, then he jumped from the cultivator, and gathering the slack of the reins, hit the horse about the head with all his might. His face was dry and white, his eyes blazing. As he continued to strike the horse, he found expression.

"You damn, lazy brute, you! I'll show you who's running this job—you or me!" His words came sharply, in gasps, between blows. Then he cursed again; cursed the work and the horse. Fine lines of fatigue showed in his face. At last he stopped. A slight color had come to his cheeks. For a moment he watched the horse, which stood with muscles moving in quivering ripples of pain and fear; then he walked soberly back and climbed upon the cultivator seat. The horses moved on. They walked evenly now, starting at any movement of the boy,

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who stared steadily at the swiftly moving ground, two red spots still burning through the tan of his cheeks.

They went once across the field. On the return, the boy stopped impetuously by the road and jumping down from the seat walked to the horse he had beaten. The horse quivered and shied toward its mate. The boy stroked its neck.

"Whoa, Jim! Whoa, boy!" he repeated.

He hesitated a moment, then went across the road to the meadow and picked an armful of young tufts of clover. He fed it to the horses, a handful at a time. They ate eagerly, all trace of fear gone as they reached out their necks for the young grass. Over the boy's face passed a conflict of expressions. At one time the cheeks were soft, and a boyish look lay in his eyes. Then came a strange, dry expression, as of age, which formed tense lines about his mouth; but as he climbed up to the seat of the cultivator, the softer expression remained.

The horses were beginning to draw at the tugs when the boy heard a horse galloping on the road behind him. He looked back. One of the neighbor boys, Bill Symonds, was riding furiously down the hill. The boy turned quickly about in the seat as if he had not seen Bill and tried to hurry the horses. What did Bill want, anyway? It was like him to blunder along when he wasn't wanted! His big, greasy face shaded by the long hair falling unkempt over his forehead had always made the boy dislike Bill. He tightened the reins.

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"Hey, Frank, wait a minute!" Bill slid awkwardly from the colt's back.

The boy twisted the reins about the levers and turned in the seat.

"How are you, Bill," he answered without animation.

Bill tied the colt, a bay, to the willows.

"Well, what do you think of my new colt?" He came closer and lounged forward against the fence. "I broke him in myself—all alone too! Now, that was a job, Lord! You ought t' seen him buckin' an' standin' on his hind legs!"

They were silent for a moment. Bill amused himself by flinging clods at the colt, which jumped wildly each time one struck him, his body quivering, his eyes white and distended.

After a few clods Bill turned to the boy.

"I guess maybe I'll be leavin' soon."

The boy looked up quickly.

"Yep, I'm goin' off to my brother's ranch in Dakota. I'm gettin' tired of the work here—it's too hard. It's work, work, work all the time with a little while for eatin' and sleepin'. All summer you c'n work your head off and then in winter you can lay off for a couple of months and don't know what to do."

The boy looked out over the fields. Even Bill could go away. The heavy, flabby cheeks, from which the small eyes peered inquisitively, disgusted the boy.

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Bill picked up another bit of turf and threw it so that the colt jumped wildly, pulling the young willows almost to the ground.

The boy turned to Bill, his face flushed.

"Say—if you want to stay around here you got to cut out firing stones at that colt. You'll never get 'im tame that way—you thick-headed fool!"

Bill stood quiet for a moment. The boy saw an expression of incredulous surprise on Bill's face. Then it became brick-red. He did not wait for Bill to answer but started the horses.

When he looked back, Bill was riding away over the top of the hill, his body swaying with the rhythm of the gallop. The boy was glad that Bill was angry. He didn't want people around. And besides, why did Bill have a chance to go away? His eyes grew hot.

The morning passed slowly. When finally the shadow of the cottonwood tree at the corner of the pasture pointed directly to the north, the boy unhitched, cleaned the cultivator shovels carefully with a handful of grass, and placed them upon the hooks. With the reins about his back, he trudged up the long slope of the hill, through the warm dust, swinging his water-pail in cadence with his steps. They reached the top of the hill. The house was only a short distance from the road. He could see his father carrying a basket of wood to the house. He hoped that his father would not come and help him unharness the horses. He wanted to be alone;

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he dreaded facing their conversation at the dinner-table. His eyes grew hot again. Everything was so old to him! He always came home just at dinner time, his father always worked about the barn, finishing work a little before so that he might help unharness the horses. And dinner was always ready when they came in the house. The boy kicked a clod viciously.

At the water trough he stopped and the thirsty horses drank deeply. His father came out of the barn, a pitchfork in his hand, and sat down on the edge of the trough, fanning himself with his hat. The boy noticed that his father seemed more tired than usual. His brown hair was already mixed with grey and was damp where the hat had rested. His eyes seemed less cheerful than usual, and his face less red.

When the horses raised their heads from the trough, the boy led them to their stalls. His father followed him.

"How was cultivatin', Frank?" he asked as he stepped into the barn.

"Oh, it wasn't bad."

"The ground was pretty hard, wasn't it?"

"Not very."

In silence they unharnessed the horses, which buried their heads in the newly-cut hay and blew the fragrant, spicy dust from their nostrils. As the boy unloosed the collar of his horse, it slipped and fell upon his foot. His face writhed in a flash of tem-

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per and he began cursing in a low tone, heavily and deliberately. Then he picked up the collar and struck the horse. Under lowered eyelashes he saw his father stand in the doorway, his face white with repressed anger. The boy stopped suddenly. He had never seen his father look like that before. He heard him turn in the doorway.

The horses fed, they walked through the hot, deserted farm-yard to the house. As they entered the shaded living-room, his mother came from the kitchen, humming a bit of tune. Her eyes lit up when she saw them. She talked cheerfully as she worked. The boy said nothing. He seemed to be looking out of the open window into the orchard; instead, through his lowered eyelashes, he followed his mother's movements about the room as she set the small table for three, still humming as she worked. The boy saw that she stopped often to cough. This was not unusual, but once the cough became so strong that it left her face colorless. Uneasily sympathetic, he noted that after this she did not hum again. Whenever she looked his way, the boy turned his head, not so soon but that he could see and feel the half-fearful appeal that darkened her eyes.

After the glasses had been filled, the three drew up to the table. The dinner was eaten in silence. The eyes of the boy constantly returned to his mother's face. Somehow she seemed different today. He wished that she didn't wear that black

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dress, it made her face look too white and her eyes too large and bright. He ate rapidly. Why didn't his father and mother talk? They used to tease him about one of the neighbor girls. But they had not for a long time now. He wondered why. Why didn't they say something? It was too still.

As soon as he had finished his meal, he drank the water left in his glass and pushed back his chair. His mother looked quickly at his father. The boy watched them closely and uneasily. Both seemed to be shrinking from something. His father carefully folded and unfolded his newspaper. Then he laid it beside his plate and cleared his throat. He turned in his chair.

"Wait a minute, Frank," he spoke with hesitation.

The boy turned, looked at his father a moment, and then sat down.

"I don't think we'll cultivate this afternoon, Frank," his father commenced slowly.

"Why—" The boy started to speak but stopped. He saw the frightened grayness return to his mother's face. His father, too, seemed restless. He crossed and recrossed his knees nervously.

"Well, Frank," he continued, "it's this way. Your Ma ain't been feelin' well for quite a while and we rode over to the doctor's this morning to see what was the matter."

His mother had gone back of his chair. He could feel her hand on his shoulders. He turned half-

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round, his hands grasping the chair tightly.

"You musn't be scared, Frank—the doctor said it wasn't so very bad."

He could feel her twining his hair about her fingers.

He turned, faced his mother silently, half afraid, as though some grim barrier stood between them. He saw fine lines about her gray eyes, and their color seemed heavy and faded. The boy sat staring at his mother with an intensity that made a color come to her cheeks, but he was not looking at her any more. Instead, he was wondering fiercely why he had never noticed the gray in her hair or the lines in her face, or the cough. The cough—surely he might have noticed that. His body lay limp against the back of the chair.

"The doctor said that Ma was pretty sick," his father was speaking on, his voice devoid of life or feeling. "But he said that she 'ud be all right if she went some place where the air was drier."

"What did he say it was?" he asked in a strained voice.

"It's her lungs, he says."

They were silent after this. He was looking out of the window at a far-away straw-stack which lay a mass of dull gold in the sombre setting of plowed land.

His mother still stood behind his chair. In the heavy silence of the room he could hear her uneven breathing. He heard his father turn in his chair.

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"Well, Mother's got to go west—we might all of us go," he spoke with an attempt at cheerfulness. "Maybe we can work a small farm out there."

"What will we do with the farm here?" As she spoke the boy felt his mother's hand press more heavily on his shoulder. He turned from the window and caught his father's eyes looking at him. He saw his face flush.

"I guess we got to sell it. I can get a fair price. Help is scarce and rent's low since the dry years. We can't afford to rent it."

Again the boy caught his father's glance resting hopefully on him.

"But we can't sell the old place; we have worked it too long."

The boy was uneasily conscious of the break in his mother's voice. He sat up, his body stiffened. Did they expect him to stay on the farm? He wouldn't—he could not do that! They had no right to ask this of him. But he remembered the quick hope in his father's eyes.

He got up from his chair, walked past his mother without looking at her, picked up his hat and went outside, closing the screen-door noiselessly behind him.

The earth slept warm in the drowsiness of early afternoon. The freshness of the morning had passed and a languorous mist had fallen. The boy looked out to where earth and sky met in a haze of indefinable color. What a wonderful earth was beyond!

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He turned and walked heavily away. They hadn't any right to expect that!

Half-unconsciously he went toward the grove north of the house where he had played when he was a little boy. The neighbor boys would collect in the grove on a quiet summer afternoon, dressed as Indians, and in heavy seriousness would plan a desperate attack on the little white house with its green trimmings. What happy times they used to have! But he wasn't a boy any more, he had grown up; still he felt an expectant eagerness as he entered the cool shade of the trees.

He followed a path, indistinct now in the rank growth of gooseberry bushes, until he reached his destination. A tree, broken off a couple of feet from the ground, had left a high stump with some ragged splinters, serving as the back of a natural chair.

The boy sat for a while, leaning back with lowered eyelashes. The dim spaces of the grove brought old memories. As he brooded there, relaxed, the sunlight coming in broken fragments through the oak leaves softened his face into almost that of a child.

Suddenly he straightened in desperate rebellion. Why did things have to happen so? He didn't want to grow older—he would rather be a boy. If he were, his father and mother would not expect him to stay on the farm. With his reflections came the picture of his mother, her dark eyes shining unnaturally out of the rigid paleness of her face. Then the black dress with its long folds—it was horrible. The boy's

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thoughts blurred into a confusion of sharp emotions.

As he lay back again, with lowered eyelids, he was vaguely conscious of the life about him. Robins hopped from branch to branch, singing and chirping. A blue-jay, in a cracked crescendo, was attacking the established order of things among birds. A bee droned idly past. Occasionally all sounds ceased, and silence, deep and impenetrable, seemed to close in. After a moment, the confused murmur of the woods began again.

In the underbrush near him, the boy became aware of a fluttering noise. At first he could see nothing; then he saw a snake— a blue racer—writhing along the ground, while above it, making queer little noises of distress, hovered a brown wood-thrush. He stiffened. His flesh always crawled at the sight of a snake! Yet, leaning forward, he watched intently. The thrush, its body a blur of brown feathers, rose and fell in continuous attack. Then he saw the reason. A few yards from the tree-stump lay a nest, hidden in a clump of gooseberry bushes. Above the rim showed a circle of hungry gaping beaks. The snake was crawling steadily toward the nest.

It was almost there. The thrush became wild in fear for its young. Again and again its body flashed in silent deadly attack. The snake, rearing its head from the ground, its jaws wide, struck back at the fluttering terror above it.

The snake reached the nest. It writhed over the edge. With a quick, sharp note the bird flung itself

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upon its enemy. A blur of brown feathers and a glimpse of a twisting, bluish body were all that the boy could see. A moment, and the snake writhed out from the nest. The thrush lay on the ground, blood crimsoning the speckled white of its breast. Its wings fluttered slightly, then the body was still.

The boy leaned back against the trunk and closed his eyes. He released his breath sharply. His throat contracted so that he almost choked. He had always had a horror of seeing a creature maimed or killed. He felt it doubly now, and he might have helped the bird,—no one else could. Yet it was only a bird; such things happened continually—they had to be: but he could not forget the flutterings of the dying thrush. Then, suddenly, he remembered his mother.

After a long time, he opened his eyes. The trees, the sky,—all the country was asleep; the absolute tranquillity of space lay lightly in the air and bathed the earth with a drowsy light. And the boy yielded himself to the silence. His eyes mirrored the mystic, reflective mood of the afternoon.

In the west, ragged clouds massed together and spread over the sky, their long streamers, black where they reached the sun, darkening the earth with the gray, misty twilight of the storm. Then a cool breeze sprang up, the clouds receded, and the sun shone out.

The boy became conscious that it was late and jumped down from his seat. He felt strangely

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cheerful. The confused emotions which had raged in him all the afternoon had spent themselves, and he whistled as he walked on between the trees. When he turned into the lane near the house, he could see, in the west, a few black masses of cloud, vivid against the crimson flame of the sky—wandering spirits in an infinity of lonely space.

At the windmill he stopped and looked toward the house. The kitchen was lighted; the rest of the house was dark and shadowy. A thin spiral of smoke twisted up until it became lost in the gray light. How home-like it all was! The boy walked quickly toward the house, took the milk pails from the hooks on the porch and went into the barn. The horses did not raise their heads from the grain as he entered. The sound of their crunching, the sweet smell of the hay, seemed part of the pervading rest and content about him. His father came up from the gloom of the barn, carrying a pail of milk. He glanced at the boy.

"I thought I'd do the chores tonight, son. You don't get a vacation very often. You ought to rest."

"Oh!" The boy felt sudden embarrassment. He had a queer pity for his father. He almost wished that he could have done the chores himself.

It was dark as they walked slowly to the house. In the dusk of the east, the moon appeared red on the rim of the horizon. Everything seemed asleep, yet infinite life still vibrated through its sleep. Out of the oak-grove sounded the hopeless lament of the

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turtle-dove, voicing the mystery and sadness of the night. From the farm to the north came the faint cry of someone calling the cows, "Co-o, boss; co-o, boss!" A moment, the boy felt as though it were the wonder and music of the horizon that called. Then he smiled at the idea.

His father stopped on the porch. The boy knew what his father was thinking, knew with a wave of pity and understanding. It seemed to him there, in the darkness, that suddenly he was able to comprehend the shadows which he had not known before in his boyish dream of life.

He took off his hat. The night wind was cool. How intense the night was! Nature seemed a living and beautiful power, ever-veiled but always near. For a moment his father rested his hand upon the boy's shoulder. The boy moved closer to him.

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## The Ballad of Mona Lisa

By S. H. M. Byers

Again Giocunda's wife had gone
To the accustomed place
Where the great master should retouch
The picture of her face.

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Three years had Mona Lisa sat
To the great Florentine;
And yet the picture was not done;
Again the fields are green.

They are alone; the greatest soul
In Italy—and she,
No rose and lily all in one
So beautiful could be.

She smiled: "This is my day you know,
It suits my face; and here,
The little clouds that come and go,
Are your loved atmosphere.

"For Leonardo, look, the mists
Across the Arno rest;
And days like these, you always said,
You painted me the best."

Day in, day out, had he not sought
Some mystery to trace?
Some thing no artist yet had caught,
The soul behind her face?

Her face with each emotion changed,
Some new enchantment wore;
And once, a longing look was hers
That was not hers before.

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Day in, day out, he painted on,
And all so tenderly,
Knew all her thoughts, save that great one
He was too blind to see.

Each held a secret neither told—
To realms of love the key;
Yet neither dared the door unfold
To love's great ecstacy.

Entrancing music was her voice,—
Soft as the murm'ring firs:
She did not know that listening there
His soul passed into hers.

Again she smiled, and gave her hand,
He kissed it in farewell,
And saw in her entreating eyes
The thing she dared not tell.

He too nor dared, nor spoke, nor knew
That moment was his doom;
As in a dream his tongue was fast:
She slowly left the room.

Transfixed, he waited there, and long
Gazed on his canvas fair,
And gazing saw the broken heart
He had not known was there.

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Days passed, and absence only lent
  Some new grief to the old:
The sorrowing, mad'ning discontent
  Of love that is not told.

Far, far, he wandered by the sea
  As by a phantom led,
But ever in his soul there burned
  The words he should have said.

"I will go back," he thought, at last,
  "I shall have courage yet,"
And turned his face to that dear spot
  Where first their souls had met.

Too late: where winds the Arno down
  To meet the blue sea wave,
They told him where to find the stone
  That marked her lowly grave.

But in a palace by the Seine,
  In gilded halls of state,
There Mona Lisa's picture hangs
  Among the fair and great.

And strangers, ling'ring long, will look,
  Chained by the master's spell,
On one whom Leonardo loved,
  Yet never dared to tell.

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## The Philosopher in Fairyland

By Roger L. Sergel

The Philosopher shifted in his cavernous easy chair and recrossed his lean legs. The firelight into which he abstractedly gazed leapt and drooped to catch his attention, but the Philosopher might just as well have been looking at one of the gloomy corners of the room for all the good the fire's anxious vanity did. Between the fluttering shadows the Philosopher's lean yellow face indicated his darkly pensive mood. Occasionally he raised his eyebrows, throwing a series of concentric arches over the surface of his cliff-like forehead. Again he recrossed his long legs, ran his fingers through his sparse iron-grey hair and touched his moustache nervously. Then quickly he turned his head to the right, for someone had softly, yet distinctly, entered the room.

An indefinite radiance danced toward him, and a little girl flung herself at his feet, clinging to his legs.

"Philosopher," she piped, "come out, come out; the grass is under a sheen of dew, and puffy clouds are chasing each other across the sky in the west—like elephants in a parade, and the air, the air is washed with moonlight. Come out, Philosopher, come out!"

"But Girl, here the lovely fire is glowing, and it is, perhaps,—a little chilly out-doors."

"O Philosopher! you know that isn't it, you know

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that you don't see the fire; you just see your old thoughts!"

"But Girl," rejoined the Philosopher, taking the Girl on his knees, "perhaps the thoughts need attention; perhaps they are beautiful as the clouds are, and the moon-lit air."

"No, no, Philosopher, not to-night. To-night only the outside is beautiful. Come out, Philosopher."

"Well, but not for long." And the Philosopher rose, towering far above the Girl, and taking one step to the Girl's three, stalked toward the door, where their forms melted into the dark.

In a minute they appeared on the wide veranda from which the dew-gleaming lawns dropped away and rose again to the misty and tree-obscured horizon. The Philosopher stood still a moment looking at the vast clouds in the west, just above which a full moon shone, keenly outlined. As the Philosopher gazed, the moon was rapidly clipped away and hidden by a giant cloud, and all was heavily dark; but soon the cloud had passed, the moon arose triumphant, and all the land broke into misty bloom again.

The Girl had tripped down the steps and was skipping to the left toward a double clump of trees, crying as she went, "Philosopher! Philosopher! this way, this way, Philosopher!"

The Philosopher walked meditatively after her, raising troubled eyes to the star-brilliant heavens. The Girl had made a detour among some low shrubs and now came flitting back to him.

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"Hurry, Philosopher," she cried a little impatiently, "I want to see the Fairy of the Fountain to-night."

"But that's too far, isn't it?" the Philosopher asked gravely.

"Oh *no*,—not if we hurry a little. Come on—"

And they entered an aisle, open about a third of its width to the sky, the rest being overhung with low-bowed branches of maples on either side. Swiftly the Girl ran down the long aisle, the Philosopher following some distance behind, his eyes beginning to grow less grave as he watched the far vision of the Girl and was soothed beneath the full-bosomed and motherly trees. Far ahead a dim light glimmered, at which the Girl had almost arrived. The Philosopher threw back his head, plunged his hands in his coat pockets, and began a vigorous walk after her.

The pale liquescence of the light soon took shape, as the Philosopher strode rapidly on beneath the trees, and became round and steady in form beneath its surface shimmer. From the center rose a tall lily-white object, vaguely discerned as a fountain under its enveloping and glistening nebulosity. As the Philosopher emerged from the tunnel of trees, the Girl, dancing around in the shrub-circled opening about the fountain, pointed to the circular body of water at her feet.

"See, Philosopher, how it shines, like a fallen moon! And Philosopher, look at the Fairy of the Fountain!"

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And the Philosopher raised his eyes to the fountain to behold the exquisitely poised figure, eager for flight, and flashing wings of radiant water.

"The Fairy, Philosopher, the Fairy!"

The Girl danced around and around,—caught the Philosopher and urged him into some awkward steps in a vain endeavor to keep up with her. In a few moments he sank exhausted on a near-by stone bench, panting and watching the irrepressible girl flitting here and there about the lawn. In a minute she called, "Philosopher, you talk with the Fairy of the Fountain while I gather some rose-buds beyond the big hedge."

With her words the Girl was gone and the Philosopher sat stolidly watching the fountain.

"Strange," he thought, "that so beautiful a thing should be so instinct with form and grace of life, and yet inanimate; so eager for flight, and yet stationary; so ready for speech and yet dumb."

"Philosopher." The word came bell-like through the air. The Philosopher looked sharply about.

"Humph," he said, "I thought the Girl had gone for roses."

"So she has," the voice returned, "and while she's away I want to speak to you a minute. No, here, *I'm* speaking, the Fairy, the Fairy of the Fountain."

"What?" ejaculated the Philosopher, stroking his close-clipt moustache excitedly. "Did you speak, F-Fairy?"

"Of course. Now listen, for my words are of

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much moment," and so saying the Fairy suddenly sat down on her pedestal, shifted her watery wings somewhat, and putting her elbow on her knee and her chin on her hand, eyed the Philosopher thoughtfully.

"Philosopher, what is your business?" she asked.

"To think things through, I suppose," the Philosopher answered after recovering himself.

"Did you ever arrive at a conclusion or conviction that has stood by you through thick and thin?"

"No,—but I have demolished conclusions and convictions of other people that have stood by *them* through thick and thin," the Philosopher replied.

"You are a naughty man," said the Fairy, "but I won't ask you any more such questions. This conversation is becoming too abstract. I hate abstractions. . . . I hate you."

"I'm sorry," the Philosopher said. "Why?"

"Because you are an abstraction and have to do with abstractions only. Why don't you do something worth while? Why don't you count the colors in the rainbow, or look for four-leaf clovers, or stamp white horses, or—"

"Because I'm not a child," the Philosopher interrupted.

"Certainly you are, though you don't know it perhaps. What is, or who is, a child? A child is one who wonders."

"Why—that's right; but that's philosophy. Plato said philosophy is wonder. Do you think he was a child?"

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"In a way," the Fairy decided judiciously, "only he didn't use much discretion. A child is one who wonders with discretion. Plato stirred things up. But no—that's wrong. You are a child; so was Plato, so is everyone. Only you are in your second childhood. A true child wonders at the immediate and you at the remote. You are a child thirty-two times removed from yourself. A child wonders at an orange, or a rhinoceros, or a picture, or a four-poster bed. You push things way off—and then wonder about them. First Causes you call them, and Freedom, Truth, Necessity, and God. Yes, you are only a child."

"Perhaps there's something in what you say—a modicum of truth. But look here," and the Philosopher eyed the Fairy sharply, "from the way you spoke of God you can't believe in Him. You must be an atheist."

"No, I am a Fairy." She mused a moment and then said slowly, "There are Gods, anyway. But stop. You're making me talk abstractions. I hate abstractions."

"So do I, sometimes," the Philosopher confessed, and bent his head thoughtfully. The Fairy broke in on his thinking.

"Philosopher, why don't you do something useful, —follow a rainbow, hunt four-leaf clovers, watch a sunset, or something like that?"

"I often watch sunsets," the Philosopher offered.

"But do you see them?"

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"Why, of course," the Philosopher answered, raising his eyebrows to look at her in a puzzled fashion.

"Philosopher, I don't believe you," the Fairy stated decisively, *"I don't believe you."*

"Why," the Philosopher expostulated, "every day in the year I've—"

"No, you haven't," retorted the Fairy. "You've seen some patches of red in the west, or some golden spots there, but I'll wager you've never seen a sunset. Have you seen the day grow tired, Philosopher, and a band of clearing blue border the eastern line of the horizon? Have you watched the mother of the colors stretch her arms after the sun has gone down? Why, she circles half the horizon with her great golden arms; and in the central horizon to the west her ample bosom burns so softly and so splendidly, robed in purest sheens of rose-flame, and her arms,—from her arms flow fold on fold of silky flame, fiery orange and living yellow. And the red that all day danced so bravely in the rose, begins to droop, to droop and to listen to the calling of her mother, and slowly goes to her; and the blue that all day flushed the sky, that drowsed among far hills, and napped within the violet, begins to wake a little, lazy old blue that he is, to rub his eyes, and then he too begins to loiter along towards his mother. And the green that greeted everything so gladly in the trees, and in the multitudinous forests of the grasses, follows the red and blue, hand in hand, then breaks from them and

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runs *so* swiftly to the mother. And the yellow of the buttercups and dandelions has long since gone; all of them but laggard blue, and finally he goes too. And the mother of the colors, radiantly and blindingly happy, gathers them all to her mothering breast, and step by step retires below the horizonal hills. Have you seen all this, Philosopher?"

"No."

"Then you have never seen a sunset."

"I fear not," said the Philosopher; then added in haste, "But, Fairy, where is the Girl? She was here but a minute ago and went for flowers. I must look for her."

"Philosopher, there is no Girl. That was only the incorrigible child in you that led you on."

"Oh."

"Philosopher, what are you thinking of?"

"Of you, and fairies. You are very beautiful."

"O Oberon! Do even Philosophers flatter? But of course, you are a man."

"Perhaps, but I also search for truth, and it is true that you are beautiful," the Philosopher insisted.

"What is beauty?" the Fairy asked quickly.

"It is—it is—it is—I don't know," he finished. "Do you?"

"Of course, being a Fairy."

"Well, what is it?"

"Beauty—beauty is a dream of love that is to be."

"And how does your being a Fairy insure your knowledge of what beauty is?"

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"That is simply because I am a Fairy."

"But what on earth is a Fairy?"

"A Fairy is one who does not have to search for beauty."

"Is there any difference between just beauty and perfect beauty?"

"Decidedly," the Fairy said. "Perfect beauty is a dream of love that can be no more."

"And can a Fairy always see that without search?"

"No, Philosopher, perfect beauty is reserved for Gods; only Gods find it at hand."

"But Fairy, what are Gods?"

"A God, Philosopher, is a Fairy who can forever live in the presence of perfect beauty."

"And perfect beauty is a dream of love that can be no more, and only Gods can forever live with it," the Philosopher mused. "The Gods must be sad, Fairy?"

"They *are* sad, Philosopher," the Fairy answered softly, "but they are still Gods."

Several minutes passed, the Philosopher resting his tired head in his hands, absorbed in thought. The Fairy shook her wings of water and then turned to admire as she gently moved them. The moonlight was paling and the air was more misty, while clouds were more closely linked, and larger. At last the Philosopher raised his head.

"Fairy," he asked huskily, "can dreams come true?"

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"No, Philosopher, for if they came true they would have been but plans whereby to build. No, dreams can never come true. That is what makes them dreams."

"But Fairy, I always thought that Fairyland was a dream, a dream of childhood,—and yet you prove it to be true?"

"By all means; Fairyland is the one established fact in the universe."

"Where is it, and what must I do to find and enter it?"

"It is everywhere. To find and enter it you must be born again and become as a child. You must forget everything but things."

"That, Fairy, I fear, is an abstraction."

"No, it is the truth. I hate abstractions."

"*So do I,*" the Philosopher emphatically affirmed. As he spoke he shuddered violently, and opened and clenched his hands convulsively. "But Fairy, what's the matter? Where am I? A little while ago I was comfortably seated in my library in my easy chair before the fire. Did I doze off, and is this a dream?"

"Foolish man," the Fairy replied as she arose, shook her wings of radiant water, and resumed her former position, eager for flight, "foolish man, for the first time in your life, you are awake."

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# The Midland Library

*Chats on Japanese Prints,* by Arthur Davison Ficke (Frederick A. Stokes Co.), is pronounced by competent authority to be "the best book about Japanese prints that has yet been written." It will be most gratefully received by the widening circle of lovers of Japanese art.

Berton Braley in his own life has tasted the grain and flavor of the realities whereof he writes in his *Songs of the Workaday World* (George H. Doran Co.). He has gained an insight into "the workaday world" which enables him to sing faithfully enough of many occupations which his own experience has not encompassed. We say "sing", and he does sing, in free, galloping verse, yet not with the force and art of Kipling, nor the vigor of Service. Many, very many, of his expressions are trite, and not many of his verses rank above good newspaper "stuff", while others are so clever and contagious that too much credit is likely to be given him. His sincerity cannot be questioned, however, and he has certainly shown the possibilities of the workaday world of which he sings so boldly. He gives new view-points in many cases, as in *The Forest Ranger,* in which the ranger is seen, not in the expected and affected adoration of his forests and his rough life, but longing for an evening in stiff evening dress. The best poems in the book are *Ready,* dealing with the "Panama Gang" in a rollicking bravado, and *To a Photographer,* which strikes a sincere note that should be heeded not alone by photographers.

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# The Midland Chronicle

The late autumn number of *The Drama* promises significance. The play in this issue is *Los Interessos Creados,* by Spain's brilliant and popular playwright, Beneventa. An authoritative essay on Beneventa accompanies the play. Another attractive feature is Edward Arlington Robinson's poem, *Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford.* Those who know Mr. Robinson's fine, thoughtful work will be interested by this beautiful, simple, and human presentation. More notable still is Rabindranath Tagore's essay on *The Stage.* The remaining articles are well worth the attention of anyone interested in the drama.

With the October number *Poetry* begins its fourth year of labor in its pioneer field. Carl Sandburg's contributions, *Days,* are refreshing reading in the midst of the many puerile vacuities now perpetrated under the guise of *vers libre.* Some of these pieces are rather slight things, but the imagery in the *Sketch* and the *Nocturne in a Deserted Brickyard,* and the tragic intensity in *Killers,* are not soon forgotten. *The Scarlet Thread* is a thoughtful piece of work by a new contributor to the magazine, Charles Hamilton Musgrove. Of peculiar interest are the translations of *Slavic Songs* by Florence Randal Livesay, who has made a special study of the folk-song of the Ukraine region.

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# The Midland

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## Heilige Nacht

By Ruth Fuller

Darkness, warm, throbbing and instinct with life. Then suddenly a vague half-formed unrest, a strange disquiet as smouldering consciousness flickered feebly and rose to an uncertain flame. Then struggle, and suffocation, and a new, bewildering world of chaos and pain.

From the next stall a gray horse looked across kindly at this strange little adventurer who came so bravely to a world of storm and stress, for outside the wind was flying splendidly among the pines, and beating up deep drifts against the door, and sifting handfuls of fine snow dust through the uneven panes. But little calf did not notice any of this uproar, nor even the kind glance of the iron-gray horse, for in the dim light which reflected into the stable from the snow outside, he could see his mother, and as he looked into her beautiful dark eyes, so full of pain and anxiety and pride, and as he felt the wonderful warm nearness of her, such wrenching waves of inarticulate love passed through him that his wabbly, ungraceful legs quite gave way and he fell in a soft heap on the stable floor. His mother bent over

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him with solicitude, her warm rough tongue touched him encouragingly; all about him in the darkness the fragrance of hay filled the stable, mingled with sweet, insistent smells of clover, and unknown herbs, and pungent weeds. About him, too, were pleasant sounds, the scrape of a rough tongue, somewhere, on a lump of salt, the sound of hay being pulled from the manger and eaten; the occasional stamping of the horses; the creaking of the boards shrinking from the cold outside; frosty, snapping noises from the trough of water over by the door; and presently from far away, solemn and storm-tossed, the ringing of a bell.

Church bells are magical things, and when their stern, sweet voices speak through storms, it is a sound to make even the merriest grave. And as they listened, there in the peaceful stable, the distant music wrought its age-old spell upon them all, and each one thought old thoughts, excepting only the mother of little calf; she thought of her baby, and so she was the first to hear, as the bell ceased, a faint, wailing cry that blew past with a great gust of wind, then came again, and then died away altogether.

It is not good to hear a baby crying in a storm, especially on Christmas eve, and the gray horse stirred restlessly, and stamped, and then was still again: for a hand fumbled at the door outside, and then it swung open, and with a great rush of snowy wind a woman entered, who, holding her baby in one arm, struggled hard before with her free hand she could shut the door against the driving storm. Then

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speaking gently to the horses as she passed them she came to the next stall and there, kneeling in the straw, close to the little calf and his mother (for they were warm and she was trembling with cold) she unwrapped her baby and taking him in her arms she covered herself and him with her cloak, murmuring to him all the while those same husky, broken sounds, which ages ago, the first mother whispered to her first baby.

After a little they fell asleep. Little calf watched curiously for a while, then he too fell asleep. But the gray horse did not sleep, for he was very clever and it puzzled him that on Christmas eve, a woman and baby could find no shelter save a stable. So he thought about it a long time, and was very careful, as he did so, not to stamp. And the mother of the little calf did not sleep, partly because of the pain, but chiefly because she was so eager for the morning, by whose light she could see her baby for the first time.

And so, when in the heavy darkness which precedes the dawn, that other mother wakened, and wrapping her baby carefully, went softly to the door, she and the gray horse were both quite wide awake. And they heard, though she moved so very quietly, her hand on the latch, then her pause and quick return.

Bending over the little calf she placed her baby's hand upon his head, murmuring something to him in that ancient language which none speak except the mothers of the newly born.

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Then she went away, and as the door opened upon the dark and bitter cold, they saw for a moment in silhouette against the dim snow, her height, and slenderness and proud carriage. Then the door swung shut.

Outside the wind had long since flown away, and now the darkness deepened momentarily and presently gave way unwillingly to a dreary gray, which crept sluggishly from the tawny rim of the eastern sky, and at last struggled half-heartedly through the snowy panes of the stable.

But to the mother of little calf it was the most welcome morning that had ever dawned, for as the light reluctantly increased it showed her there in the pale gold straw at her feet, her baby, and at the sight of him even the proud black horse stared in wonder. For the little calf that had been born in the darkness and cold of Christmas eve was white, exquisitely and altogether white, except that on his head there was a yellow star, a very little star—, a star no larger than a baby's hand.

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## King Christmas

By H. B. Alexander

### I

"O where is King Christmas, Mother, my Mother?
O where is King Christmas,—come tell it to me,—
Wi' his gauds and his joys and his frolic and laughter
And the lightings of stars that brighten his ee?
O where is King Christmas, sweet Mother tell me."

"In a faraway land, Laddie, my Laddie,
In a faraway land King Christmas doth reign,
And he holdeth high court in a Castle of Starshine
And starry-eyed children do dance in his train,—
In the faraway land where Christmas doth reign."

"O I'll hie me a pilgrim, Mother, my Mother,
And I'll haste me afar King Christmas to seek,
And I'll dance in his train wi' the starry-eyed children,
And I'll set me a kiss upon the King's cheek,—
For I'll hie me a pilgrim King Christmas to seek."

He has wandered him forth in the years that are youngest,
He has wandered him forth in the innocent years
Whose days are o'erbroidered with golden-rayed laughter

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And sown with the pearls that are childhood's light
tears,—
He has wandered him forth on his pilgrimage years.

But the snows they be driven, and the frost it is
chill,
And the bright stars of Heaven shine distant and
still,
While the Castle of Christmas is aye o'er the hill.

II

"Say, where is King Christmas, Sister, dear Sister?
Say, where is King Christmas,—and we'll go for
to see
All the sparkle and joy of the Castle of Starshine
And the high-shining treasures that hang on his
Tree,—
O we'll find us King Christmas his wonders to see!"

"Nay, I know not the way thither, Brother, my
Brother,
Nay, I know not the way, but from over the hill—
Do you harken the song of the blessedest children
Where wi' laughter and dancing they do the King's
will,
In the Castle of Starshine just over the hill?"

"Yes, I harken the singing, Sister, my Sister,
O I harken the singing where Christmas doth
dwell—

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All the music and joy of the blessedest children
And their pattering feet and the crystalline bell—
O hasten us, hasten where Christmas doth dwell!"

He has taken the hand o' his own little sister,
He has taken her by her hand so small,
And out they have gone to the Castle of Christmas,
And the shadows lift and the shadows fall
While he holds her fast by her hand so small.

But the snows they be driven, and the frost it is chill,
And the bright stars of Heaven shine distant and still,
With the Castle of Christmas aye over the hill.

III

"O where is King Christmas, Mother, my Mother,
O where is King Christmas—sweet Mother tell me—
For I've wandered awide through the years that are youngest,
I've wandered awide wi' my own sister wee,
But the Castle of Christmas we never might see."

"Ah, woe is my heart, Laddie, my Laddie,
Ah, woe is my heart for the innocent years
That ye've wandered in search o' the Castle of Christmas—
And now ye have found it mine eyes blind wi' tears,
For ye've come to the end o' the innocent years!"

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"And this is the Castle, Mother, my Mother!
And mine was the starshine and mine was the tree!
And the joy and the song o' the blessedest children
Were all in the heart o' my own sister wee—
And the high-shining treasures were ever wi' me!

"O I've wandered awide, Mother, my Mother,
And I've come to the end o' the pilgrimage years,
And I stand at the gate of the Castle of Starshine,
And I see the bright vision and I feel the hot tears,
For I've passed from my childhood into men's years."

But the snows they be driven and the frost it is chill,
And the cot of the Christ Child lies over the hill,
And the tree is the Rood that is holiest still.

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## The Powerful Wobberjohn

By Avery Abbott

It was an occasion of unusual interest to everyone in the secret. John Hammond blushed over it, as a bachelor properly should who brazenly assumes relationship to a child that is called a nephew. However, he made a very good show of composure as the afternoon Limited came snorting in, bearing the cause of his trepidation.

The two for whom he waited came gayly down the steps of the Pullman, but they came on one pair of legs. The other pair, short, fat and encased from the toes in fuzzy gray, soon dangled confidingly below the grasp of John Hammond's left arm.

The rotund little body belonging to these legs was coated in the same curly gray, while under John Hammond's right ear a fluffy gray paw clung tightly and tickled in a most endearing fashion. Hammond might have been carrying some kind of small, bearish animal but for the face below the snug, gray cap. A chubby face it was, with round, blue eyes blinking in the snow glare, an indefinite, but distinctly humorous nose and a mouth that was red and merry.

"I'm a thousand times obliged to you, Jim, for going after him." Hammond turned to the youth of twenty who had just stepped down upon the platform. "It was necessary that I should be at that directors' meeting and I couldn't wait. Hope he wasn't any trouble."

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like to hang up your stocking and have a Christmas tree?"

"Yes," the child showed only an even cheerfulness. Four years of vicissitude had given him the composure of a philosopher. A moment later he looked up to add with a confident smile, "And a dog?"

The man stooped to see if he had understood. "A dog?"

The trudge by his side turned to a jerky hop. "Dogs is nice!"

"So they are. We will ask Mrs. Phillips about the dog. Mrs. Phillips is going to take care of you while I am at the office. She is a very useful and indispensable person. She will mother you according to her lights, but I'm not sure that she bargained for a dog." After a moment's pause, "Your name is Robert, isn't it? I think Mrs. Phillips and I will call you Bobby. Would you like that?"

"Yes. Spotty was a nice dog. He liked raw potatoes. Do you like raw potatoes?" With uplifted face Bobby seemed to hang upon the answer.

"I don't remember that I ever tried. I don't think I should, though."

"No, I s'pect not. Spotty was an awful smart dog."

Hammond threw back his head with a spontaneous laugh that rang in the frosty air, but as the child regarded him with a look of anxious wonder, he composed his face to inquire: "Where is Spotty?"

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"Not a bit," replied Jim May. "He's a jolly little chap."

The man laughed heartily, as though this simple comment were somehow a great joke. "Come over this evening," he called out as they parted. Then he retraced a few steps to add, in a facetious whisper, "Here comes Mrs. Morrison. I'll introduce him to her, and no further explanation will be necessary in this town."

The lady in question was already swishing down upon them with curiosity, veiled by polite friendliness.

John Hammond met her half way. "My nephew desires to be introduced to you, Mrs. Morrison. I have promised him that he shall meet our first families. Isn't he a fine young man? He is spending the holidays with me."

"Charming child," cooed Mrs. Morrison. "Your brother's son?"

"On the other side," was the suavely indefinite reply as John Hammond strode on with his guest held high.

"You going to call me Uncle John, old man?" he twisted his head around to look into the child's face.

"Yes." The dangling legs kicked a little. "I like to walk in the snow."

"You do? Well, there you are!" He set the boy down on his stubby feet and grasped the gray mitten. "How would you like to have a sled? Do you know that day after tomorrow is Christmas? Would you

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"I don't know. We couldn't take him to the Home. I guess he's pretty lonesome after me by now."

They had turned in at the entrance of a place which was both comfortable and sumptuous, but if John Hammond expected his visitor to be in any way impressed by his new surroundings he made a mistake. Bobby took the richly appointed house precisely as he would have taken squalor and deprivation, with a sort of infant urbanity. He accepted Mrs. Phillips in the same fashion, and gave her a smile of ingenuous friendliness, as though an elderly woman in a crooked false front and a state of trepidation was exactly what you always found when you went to a strange gentleman's house to spend Christmas.

The housekeeper's nervousness abated appreciably at sight of Bobby's amiable countenance, and was still more allayed by the capable manner in which he helped her to remove his outer garments. It was a delusion of Mrs. Phillips' that she disliked children, a delusion which she fostered by making an exception of each particular child.

When the taking off of Bobby's wraps showed him in a much worn and faded suit, John Hammond answered the unspoken question in his housekeeper's face.

"Jim May's mother is coming over after lunch and have a look at the little chap. Then she is going to get whatever he needs. Until he is fitted out as my nephew, nobody else sees him. You won't forget, Mrs. Phillips."

No, she would not forget. Nobody interested in

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this weighty affair could forget, and least of all young Jim May and his mother, who sat eagerly talking together over their bright little luncheon table.

"The kid is just a dandy little chap, mother," exuberated Jim, with a slash at his omelet, "and I believe 'Dad' means to keep him. Do you suppose he knows who the child is?"

"I'm sure I have no idea, Jimmie. I hope he will conclude to keep him." Mrs. May gazed reflectively into her tea-cup. "There are plenty of boys in Ralston who look to John Hammond as their best friend. He likes to have them call him 'Dad,' but it's not the same as having one that would call him father. Is the child pretty?"

"Not very, I guess, but he's awfully jolly looking. Wasn't it like 'Dad' to send me off down there without any explanation? As if he was asking me to go over to the library for a book. I found out when I got there that he had written to make all the arrangements." After a meditative pause, Jim bashfully asked: "Say, Mother, why did 'Dad' never marry?"

A shadow touched the woman's delicate face. "That is a bitter story, Jimmie, and it happened long ago. I don't believe any one here knows about it, but back where we both came from, it made a good deal of feeling at the time. John Hammond's elder sister and I were great friends, so I was especially interested. He was engaged to be married to a beautiful girl. He had their house built, and they had

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even furnished it. Everything was ready, the wedding day was very near, then it was suddenly broken off. John let it be understood that the girl had done it. Perhaps she did; at least, after a while she married another man, a man whom none of us knew."

"She must have been a dandy!" Jim's tone was comprehensive.

His mother reflectively added: "I don't believe John Hammond has ever thought of marriage since. The affection that would have gone to a wife and children he has given to other people's boys. I don't know what *I* should have done without him, when I was left with such an awful proposition as my son Jim!" She shook her head and laughed teasingly at son Jim, then briskly rose. "And now," she cheerfully went on, "I must go and see about a wardrobe for this 'little stranger'. I wonder how Mrs. Phillips is by this time?"

"Mean as a dill pickle, the first fifteen minutes and then spoil him to death. You'll see!" prophesied Jim. "She can boss 'Dad', though. Perhaps she will know how to manage the kid."

The authority of Mrs. Phillips, however, appeared to be in the descendant when she opened the Hammond door to Jim May that same evening.

"Mr. Jim," she began, in a piercing whisper, at the first sight of the caller, "I do wish you'd say a word to Mr. Hammond. He's got that child a-sleepin' on the libr'y sofa, though I said, plain, he ought to be put right to bed. I'm responsible for the health

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of that boy and I want to start him reg'lar in his habits."

"Sure!" assented Jim, as he also disappeared into the library where he found a scene of great contentment. Bobby, his round person clothed in a new, brown suit, and sprawled like a star fish, was occupying as much of the surface of the big leather couch as his short stature made possible. Hammond, with his back to the light and his face toward the child, lifted a warning hand.

"Went to sleep in his high chair over his pudding," he explained in an undertone. "Don't know that we need to be careful, though. He certainly seems a good sleeper."

Taking the hint, Jim picked up a late magazine and sat him down to its pages. These two were so frequently together that they often spent whole evenings with scarcely a word exchanged. But this time Hammond occasionally glanced at the youth as if he had something to say, and presently he drew from his pocket a notebook, from between the book's leaves a clipping, and examined long the illustration which was blurred and blotted upon the square of newspaper.

At last he closed the picture once more within the book and turned to his companion as if about to speak, hesitated, rubbed his forefinger reflectively along his shaven chin and finally said:

"I tell you what, Jim, this vicarious parenthood gets a kind of cold, left-over, warmed-up feeling after a while."

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Jim raised his head, but not knowing precisely what to say, wisely said nothing.

Hammond went on: "You and I are good chums, but in an hour or so you will be going home; your mother will meet you at the door, and coddle you, and spoil you, and rejoice in her own and only son. She spares you to me occasionally, especially when you need to be soundly lectured or pulled out of a scrape. But you are only a loan. So are all my other boys." John Hammond plowed his fingers through his hair and pursed his lips in serious reflection. "But now, Jim—I want a youngster of my own. One that nobody else has any string to. I want one *I* can spoil. Maybe it never occurred to you that . . . ." Hammond came to an abrupt stop in a speech which, for him, was remarkable, not only because of its length but in its self-revelation.

As for Jim May, he was too much surprised by this sudden expression of feeling from 'Dad' to make any reply whatever. Meanwhile, Hammond once more took out the newspaper clipping and reached it over to him.

"That's a picture of a bunch of kids, set up in stiff rows like ninepins, out at the Detention Home where you got Bobby. There he is down in the front rank, the one with the bib overalls. See him?" In his eagerness, Hammond got up and came to look over Jim's shoulder.

"Here, this one, with the snubby nose. I took a notion to the little chap just from that picture." The speaker turned to regard the sleeping child upon the

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couch. Then he rammed his hands deep into his pockets and took a few nervous strides about the room. "I don't just know why his little face appealed to me so strangely. I had them send him for a visit, sort of an approval. Sounds small, doesn't it? As if he was some kind of a new patent machine." He stopped in his walk to look down again upon the boy. "Now he is here, I feel as if he were the one who ought to be considering me on approval."

It seemed that the man's regard disturbed the child; for he began to toss about and whimper, then he suddenly sat up.

"Hurts!" he complained, with drowsily drooping head but quivering lips.

"What do you suppose is the matter with him?" Hammond was in instant consternation. "What hurts, Bobby?"

The child was making futile movements, heavy with sleep, but the interested Jim was inspired with a memory.

"Maybe it's his new shoes," he suggested.

"Why, of course it is, of course they hurt! Great idea, for me not to think of that!"

The two, bending over Bobby, extricated a foot apiece. Then Hammond took him in his arms and opening the door, called Mrs. Phillips, who appeared with noticeable promptness.

"Will you please bring me his paj—whatever he is to wear at night? Thank you, no," as the housekeeper seemed to be preparing to take the child. "He is

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too heavy for you. I'll undress him and then I'll carry him up myself." Hammond spoke with the utmost assurance, but when he came back to the fire, clutching a white garment in the hand which had carefully closed the door upon Mrs. Phillips, he was smiling mischievously.

"Now, Jim," he said, as he sat down and balanced the blinking Bobby upon his knees, "I guess you and I can manage to take him apart. It may require Mrs. Phillips to put him together in the morning."

They were both astounded at the number of buttons that went to one small boy, but Bobby waked up to the game, and by dint of pulling his small person in one direction while two men pulled his garments in the opposite direction, he speedily emerged in the natural state.

"I wonder if he'll take cold?" was Hammond's worried comment as he clumsily hustled him into his nightgown. "Just hand me that blanket, will you, Jim? He can't be put to bed till he goes to sleep again." Bobby lost no time in complying with the last of these conditions, but when Jim May went home, and it must have been an hour later, he left 'Dad' still sitting in that same chair before the fire, clasping a snugly wrapped bundle of bright blanket, while a round, yellow head reposed easily in the hollow of his arm. Jim could not remember ever before having seen such a thoroughly rested look on 'Dad's' face.

But Hammond's countenance wore a very different expression the next morning. Upon reaching his

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office he had lost no time in communicating by telephone with the institution which was lending him Bobby. With intent to complete arrangements for keeping the child, he was inquiring all particulars regarding him, and it was apparent these particulars were not reassuring.

"Will you spell the father's name, please? . . . . You are sure it is Atchison?—Atchison Brown?" Hammond seemed about to hang up the receiver, then after a moment's wait, he once more put it to his ear. "You are sure the father is dead? . . . . And have you the full name of the mother? . . . ." His face hardened as he repeated it. "Evelyn Melton Brown. And she is? . . . . Dead. . . . . Yes. That is all. Thank you. Good-bye."

As he hung up the receiver John Hammond's eyes were ugly with an old hate. So this was the reason, after all, why that merry little face of Bobby's had so unaccountably attracted him? It was like hers. He could see it plainly now. Not so pretty nor so delicate but with the same piquancy and the same merry mouth. Probably the other features were like the father. There was no chance of a mistake. Brown was common enough but not Atchison Brown, and besides, the mother's name clinched the matter. Three other children, all dead, and this last one so strangely fallen to him! Well,—well—! John Hammond was shaking his head in weary bewilderment at the perversity of circumstance, when the door opened to admit his stenographer and immediately, with a few brief directions, he left the office.

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Reaching the streets he walked up one way and down another, rapidly but quite without aim, until suddenly catching sight of the familiar entrance to a great wholesale house, he stopped, considered a moment, entered, and taking the elevator, was soon facing Jim May.

"Jim," he said in an undertone and quite without preface, "I wish you'd take a little time at the noon hour to buy some things for Bobby's Christmas. Just get a lot, Jim, anything you happen to see—you know so much better what a little boy would like. Get a Christmas tree, too, and have the bills sent to me. And by the way, could you go down to the Detention Home again soon? Say day after tomorrow? You could? Well, then, I wish you'd do that for me, and take Bobby. I think—I think he is going to be too much trouble for Mrs. Phillips."

Jim was left gazing after 'Dad's' square-set shoulders swinging out the door. There had been no time for question or for comment, though Jim's expression was saying plainly: "Well, what do you know about that!"

But he would have voiced no astonishment in Hammond's hearing. Even 'Dad's' intimates seldom offered him advice, and on this day everyone with whom he came in contact recognized the need of especial discretion.

It had been his plan to go home for luncheon; but instead he did not return until later than was his custom; and when he came in sight of the house a laughing face parted the stiff lace curtains from a

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window and a chubby hand was waved behind the glass. Before he had the latch key in the door he heard small feet running down the hall to meet him, and Bobby appeared in high glee, while Mrs. Phillips hovered smiling in the background.

Drawing a hand across his forehead, the man turned toward the library. "I have a bad headache to-night, Mrs. Phillips. I shall not want any dinner."

The face of the housekeeper became at once serious. This was almost an unheard-of proceeding. "What can I do for you?" she questioned anxiously.

"Nothing. Nothing whatever. Just give the child his dinner, please, and put him to bed when it is time. I don't want to be disturbed." But he *was* disturbed by the constant image of a round-eyed, very wistful little face of which he had caught one unintended glimpse before he shut the library door.

It was a long time afterward that Hammond once more emerged, and asking for Mrs. Phillips, inquired if Bobby was asleep.

He wished he had given directions that the child should be kept in Mrs. Phillips' room, but finding that he had been put into the cot beside his own bed, the same which he had occupied the preceding night, Hammond went on with what he had to say.

"If you are sure he is asleep then I wish you would arrange the tree that was sent home. Put it in the dining room and close the doors. The parcels came, of course? Well, you fix it all as you think best. You know so much better how to do it, Mrs. Phillips,

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than an old bachelor, like me." Hammond made out to smile. "I want Bobby to have the best time we can give him. It will be something for him to remember when he gets back to the Home. He leaves the day after Christmas." Hammond was turning away without looking at his housekeeper and she, in her surprise, almost let him go, then she said:

"He cried, sir."

"Cried?" Hammond turned with a scowl. Certainly Mrs. Phillips had no right to use little boys so harshly that they cried. "What made him cry?"

"He had something for you. I guess he was disappointed. It does not matter." This was Mrs. Phillips' turn to be dignified. She walked off and left him.

He intended to go back to the library, but half way there he changed his mind and went up stairs to his room. He would make sure for himself that the child was asleep. Very carefully he stole across the room and turned on the light, but either Bobby was already awake or the flash roused him. Immediately he sat up in bed with flushed cheeks and eyes wide and bright.

"Is you very sick?" he questioned.

"Not sick at all," Hammond answered. "But you must lie down now. I thought you were asleep."

Bobby was fumbling around his pillow; he put out his hand with something in it. "It's for you," he said, then as Hammond made no motion, "To keep," he insisted. The man held to the light what had been placed in his fingers, and saw a small square of wov-

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en, colored paper. "I made it for you," went on Bobby. "It's tored some." He climbed along the bed and laid his finger on a ragged corner. "They are awful hard to make, I learned out at the Home. Don't you like it?" as there was no response.

"Very much," protested Hammond. "I think it's beautiful. But now you must get under the covers," he tucked the boy in and sat on the edge of the cot beside him.

"Tomorrow is Christmas, Bobby. Did Mrs. Phillips tell you? You are going to have a Christmas tree."

Bobby's head popped up suddenly. "Where is it?"

"Oh, you'll see in the morning. Santa Claus will find it. Did you have a tree last Christmas?"

A shake of the head for answer. "I hanged up my stocking."

"And where did you hang it?"

"On a chair. Muvver hanged it."

"And your father, did he help hang it?"

A shake of the head.

Hammond hesitated. Well, it might as well be over at once. "Do you remember your father, Bobby?"

Another shake, rather indifferent. "*What* will I get on the Christmas tree?"

"Oh, all kinds of things boys like. Did your mother never talk to you about your father, Bobby?"

Again a shake, this time decided and then, as if just growing interested in the conversation, "Muvver didn't call me Bobby."

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"Oh, she called you Robert?"

"No! John! Sometimes she called me Wobberjohn."

"Bobby, look up here," Hammond straightened the child about so that he could see his face better. "Do you know what your name is? All of it?"

"Wobberjohn Bwown. Where is the Christmas tree? Do I have to go to sleep first?"

After a moment Bobby repeated his question, "Don't I have to?"

But still it was not answered, and for a moment the child lay quiet, watching the face above him. Something had been wrong. Bobby did not know what; something was coming right, Bobby did not know how; yet he felt through all his little being a warm, sweet glow of safety and gladness.

Then the man stooped and, lifting the boy in his arms, he went to a desk, where he opened a drawer and took out a small photograph. The card was yellowed, with brownish edges, and across the back was written, "Evelyn Melton to John Robert Hammond."

Holding the picture before the child, Hammond asked, "Do you know who it is, Bobby?" No, Bobby did not, nor did he seem to care.

"Why, yes, you do, little boy. Look closely. That is your mother."

Now Bobby took an interest. He straightened up and stared hard at the face, but he had no memory of such girlish fairness; at once he put it away. "No, it isn't," he declared. "What makes you say it is?"

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"Because it truly is, little boy."

Bobby made no further protest; he sighed, stirred a little, restlessly, and asked, "Don't we hang up my stockings?"

On a chair by the cot his little garments were folded, and across the chair's back dangled two small black legs with white-tipped feet. Hammond caught these up, and throwing a quilt about the boy, started down the stairs.

"We are going to do it right now, Bobby. You shall do it yourself." The man spoke gayly as he carried the boy into the library and held him up before the fireplace that he might hang a stocking to a jutting tile on either side the chimney piece.

"And can I take 'em all back with me?" questioned Bobby.

"Take what? Back where?"

"Back to the Home when I get done visiting? All the things that will be in my stockings?"

John Robert laughed, such a queer, breaking laugh that Robert John looked up at him in bewilderment as he had on the first day he came. Then he felt himself held very tight and they two went over to sit in the big chair before the telephone.

"Give me five, four, two. . . . . That you, Jim? Well, if you haven't any plans you can't change, I wish you and your mother would take your Christmas dinner with us tomorrow. . . . . Good! We shall expect you. . . . . And, Jim!—tell your mother I shall want to introduce her to a new member of my family: to my son—Robert John Hammond."

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## The Prairie Seasons, IV

## The Spirit of Winter

By Selden L. Whitcomb

Not all the days of the winter months upon the prairie are wintry days. In the course of the years, now and again one may see the mercury creeping up well-nigh to summer heat. In Kansas, before the end of January one may sometime watch spring plowing in the fields and enterprising work within the garden; one may expect to hear the redbird sing with almost April fluency. The second month may bring the northward flying geese, the maple blossoms, and even butterflies. It was in February, long years ago, that William Savage, the "Thoreau of Iowa," shot a "Red Tailed Buzzard on the nest". One Christmas Day we travelled two hundred miles or more across the plains of South Dakota. The sunny air was mild, and on a village court the tennis players were making holiday. The clouds of dust were whirling down the streets of Yankton. How gladly also memory recalls one early January day in Guthrie—a day with skies of delicate blue, ribbed faintly by the cirrus clouds, a day of brilliant sunshine, mellow atmosphere. A little ladybird, in red and black, was stirring on the ground, and many another tiny insect was flying in the warmer air. How genial was the bluebird's call; how spirited the chatter of the Carolina wren, there by the negro's cottage with its white-washed picket fence!

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Such days are pleasant to the senses, but alien to the spirit of the winter. That spirit, though variable and transient as every spirit is to human search, is found in symbols more austere, more elemental. For imagination, if not for science, the life of nature is more simple in winter than in the other seasons. Heavy foliage and clusters of fruit may please luxurious taste, but there is something that appeals to a stoical mood in the bare trunk of the maple on the lawn, the bare line of osage hedge across the field. Nor shall we heed the cry, "pathetic fallacy", as for the moment we select from winter treasures those which please us most.

Omitting flaring dandelions, the blossoms of the prairie winter are obscure, of little beauty unto careless eyes—chickweed, wild pepper-grass, and shepherd's purse. The birds which harmonize with the genuine wintry landscape are, with some exceptions, simple in plumage, notes and manner; few force themselves on our attention. The shrike sits grim and silent on the wayside wire, creeper and nuthatch go modestly about their business. The calls of the tufted titmouse, of all the woodpeckers, are clear and resonant, but not too often heard, nor of elaborate structure. A single crow winging against the sky or perched on a broken cornstalk, a flock of juncoes in the evergreens, are not enough to complicate the scene. When rarer guests appear—redpolls and cross-bills, evening grosbeaks—the visitation is engraved on memory in clear, enduring lines. We do not need to rush from grove to garden, as when the

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warblers migrate. Phenomena of atmosphere and sky and soil are not monotonous, they may be richly varied; yet "jocund," "garish," are not terms for steady use in winter. Sight and hearing seem a little more accomplished in the mastery of nature. The curves of the channel are visible for many miles, the surface sheeted with ice is less confusing than waters blown into ripples, eddying about snag and boulder, vexed by floating debris. Far across the hills appear in sharp relief the farmhouse, silo, stack, and standpipe. The snowclad fields are simple in effect; so are the slopes of dry, brown grasses, the marshes robed in brownish weeds, the black areas of soil exposed by autumn plough-shares. In the skies, this day or that, are sun and moon and stars, sun-dog and halo; but all unveiled, inviting contemplation. The elemental lessons in the forms of cloud may well begin in winter. The curtain without fold across the sky, the ribbon of the cirrus at the zenith and the simple bar at the horizon dominate the season. True, there are days of blinding snow, of lingering fog, but when they pass, the same far vistas open, the same clear objects greet us. When rain has frozen on the branch and bole, and the sun is shining, a brilliant world appears; but in that dazzling vision is no hint of artifice or luxury. What sings the stoic?

"At the end of the rainbow, gold,
At the midnight banquet, vice;
For me, a winter morning cold
And a ramble amid the ice!"

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To these and a myriad other suggestions of external nature, human nature, if sound, responds with the winter virtues: prudence, patience, simplicity, courage. Facing the elements in their sterner moods, the normal man develops, not merely individual fighting power, but also comradeship.

For mere prudence, the thresher is robed in heavy canvas in the Kansas field, the coal is in the South Dakota cellar, the ice-yacht waits in readiness by Lake Mendota. The steamboats that have wound their way across Missouri since river traffic opened in the spring have entered winter quarters at Kansas City or St. Louis. The barges of the Illinois canal are safely moored, and many a house-boat rests securely by the bank of the Great River, at St. Paul, Winona, Burlington.

The fight is made with greatly varying armor, defensive and offensive. In bygone years, what ample equipment of boots well-oiled, of heavy cap, of mittens, scarf and wristlets, the prairie boy brought forth against the snow and cold! For the long drive over the snowy roads—not rarely over fence-tops—to the Christmas dinner at the uncle's farm, what bundling into shawls and buffalo robes, what anxious heating of bricks and "freestones" for the bottom of the sleigh! For the long winter evenings at home, there were supplies of tapers, tallow candles, kerosene lamps; of Greenings, Bellflowers and popcorn; of welcome numbers of *The Youths' Companion, St. Nicholas* or *Golden Days*. Of days yet earlier, the pioneers have left abundant records. One morning

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just before the Christmas Day of 1851, Ezra Meeker set out, before daybreak, for a thirty-five mile journey by horse and foot across the snowy prairies of southwestern Iowa. "The good lady of the cabin baked some biscuits for a noon lunch, but they were frozen solid in our pockets before we had been out two hours." The four sun-dogs were "a beautiful sight to behold, but arising from conditions intolerable to bear. Vance came near freezing to death, and would had I not succeeded in arousing his anger and gotten him off the mare." Of another Iowa winter in the fifties, another pioneer writes thus: "The stage was three days coming sixty miles about the middle of December. At night of the third day the coach and baggage were left three miles southeast of this point, the driver coming in with the horses and mail, and the passengers on foot. I believe thirty-eight persons were known to have perished of cold in our state that winter." In later years, a train arrived one winter day drawn by five engines, some still alive, some dead. "Snow and ice had taken possession of the train and it had somewhat the appearance of a funeral procession."

The fires with which we fight the cold—and loneliness! Coming home from Salem mill one winter day in 1861, Savage found the creek too high to cross. He "made a fire and waited till the water sank." Hot air arising from the floor, hot water in the coils beside the wall, may satisfy perhaps the practical, but surely even in these latter days all men of fancy crave the open fire. Even in the mild atmosphere of

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southern Kansas on that New Year's Day, how good it was to watch the giant flames of burning gas flare up against the deepening dark. This Christmas Eve (if fortune sends the ice), beside a hundred prairie ponds the great shore fires will glow with welcome and with warmth for youthful skaters, man and maid. With night and cold shut out, at a thousand little railway stations on the prairie, the traveling man and farmer, comrades for the nonce, will gather near the stove, red-hot with burning coals dug from the prairie mines. The winter ramble through the timber by the creek is incomplete without a generous fire, made in the snow perhaps; the fuel, wreckage from the woods. How pleasantly it glimmers in the distance when, homeward bound, we bid it "Vale", and turn again, reluctantly, to face the chilling wind. At the end of wintry journeys, made on foot or wheels or runners, how often have we heard the simple, genuine words of welcome, "Draw your chair up nearer to the fire; it must be very cold outside." And, in the olden days, fresh wood or coal was added to the fire by kindly hands. Can a really bad man build and sustain a really good fire? Ethics, mayhap, disdains to answer; we must answer, "No!"

When the snow falls, man—or boy or girl or woman—will wrest some value from it beyond the mere aesthetic boon and the obvious service to the soil and seed. Light snow is good for snowballs and for fox-and-geese; a heavier fall impels young architects to fashion tunnel, fort and cave. How often, when all neighboring snow has vanished, we see the blurred,

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distorted form of some heroic figure slowly sinking on the lawn! At the Christmas party, fair maidens used to carry the long, flexible ribbons of molasses taffy to harden on the snowbank in the yard. In natural state, the snow is good (when you are young) to wash your neighbor's face (if he is young and blessed with gracious humor); melted above the kitchen fire, it is good to wash the faces of humble people, young or old. The chemistry of snow, much more its alchemy, is not for all of us, but one is told that housewives scent ammonia therein, and sometimes knead graham flour by its aid toward loaves "that after no repenting" draw.

One New Year's day we travelled northward on the northern prairie. We had passed the field where the plough lay surrounded by snow, the opening in the woods with wigwam piles of cordwood, freshly cut. We had seen the black steers in the trampled cornfield, the snow-drifts deep along the hedge, the lake all covered by the snow, the youngsters carrying skates along the street and the farmers' sleds before the country store. All this was good, was wintry, but it lacked the concentration of an ideal symbol. At a little village some fifty miles this side of St. Paul, a veritable son of winter came aboard the train. He was a sturdy, red-faced man, mature in years, silent, reserved, almost morose, in manner. He wore a heavy cap, and heavy coat of corduroy, and on his feet were heavy overshoes. He seemed like some old viking of Icelandic story, and it were nothing strange if blood of vikings really pulsed within his

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veins. Men of the railway crew, like other men of restless modern nature, plied him with bantering questions. At last, in patient stoicism, almost without a word, he drew from out his gunny sack, just far enough to show its bulk, the guerdon of his fight with cold and snow and ice—a pickerel of twelve or fifteen pounds.

His labor may have been in solitude, but when the early winter night was falling he returned to human fellowship. There is a comradeship of summer, but that of winter seems to us more vital, more generous, more instinctive. What man so gruff as not to greet a stranger met along a country road knee-deep with snow and swept by an icy blizzard? In winter, prairie bands of many a score of neighbors gather for the hunting of the coon or coyote, rabbit or opossum. A merry party fills the sleigh; a hundred strong the skaters glide across the river ice. The streets of all our prairie capitals are gay at the Christmas season. Rare game from western mountains and northern woods, fair fruits from all the sunny south, are in Chicago markets. In Minneapolis, as one saunters down the snowy avenue, it is pleasant to remember that those attractive Christmas trees displayed for sale and sought of many mothers clad in furs, are children of the state itself. (Just for a moment, then, one lingers by the corner, dreaming of the hermit thrush that sang from northern pines, the brook that raced in June by spruce and orchid to the Lake; the long beach, moonlit, swept by glimmering waves that August night).

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Not long ago we spent a Christmas at a well-known "Springs" resort upon the timbered bluffs above a prairie river. Alone that Christmas Eve, we rambled for an hour about the spacious grounds, dark and deserted. The snow lay in thin patches here and there. All was utter silence save for the rustling of the oak leaves in a gentle breeze. Far down the slope and over meadows, a single farm-house light was shining. But near at hand the great hotel stretched out along the summit, like a medieval palace, brilliant with lights and glad with Christmas welcome. Within, the genial host was telling pleasant tales, and ready hands were busy with festoons and tree. The next morning after breakfast, all were gathered in the cheerful dining room—host and guest and servant; child and adult; Irish, German; the lively young girl harpist from Chicago and the faded consort of the ranchman in Alberta. Yes, black and white! For each there was a gift. The millionaire, the judge, made speeches, but the word most heartful and most memorable was from an aged woman servant. Once more the spirit touched us of that faith which fain would shelter all the earth, which knows no Jew or Gentile, bond or free.

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END OF VOLUME ONE

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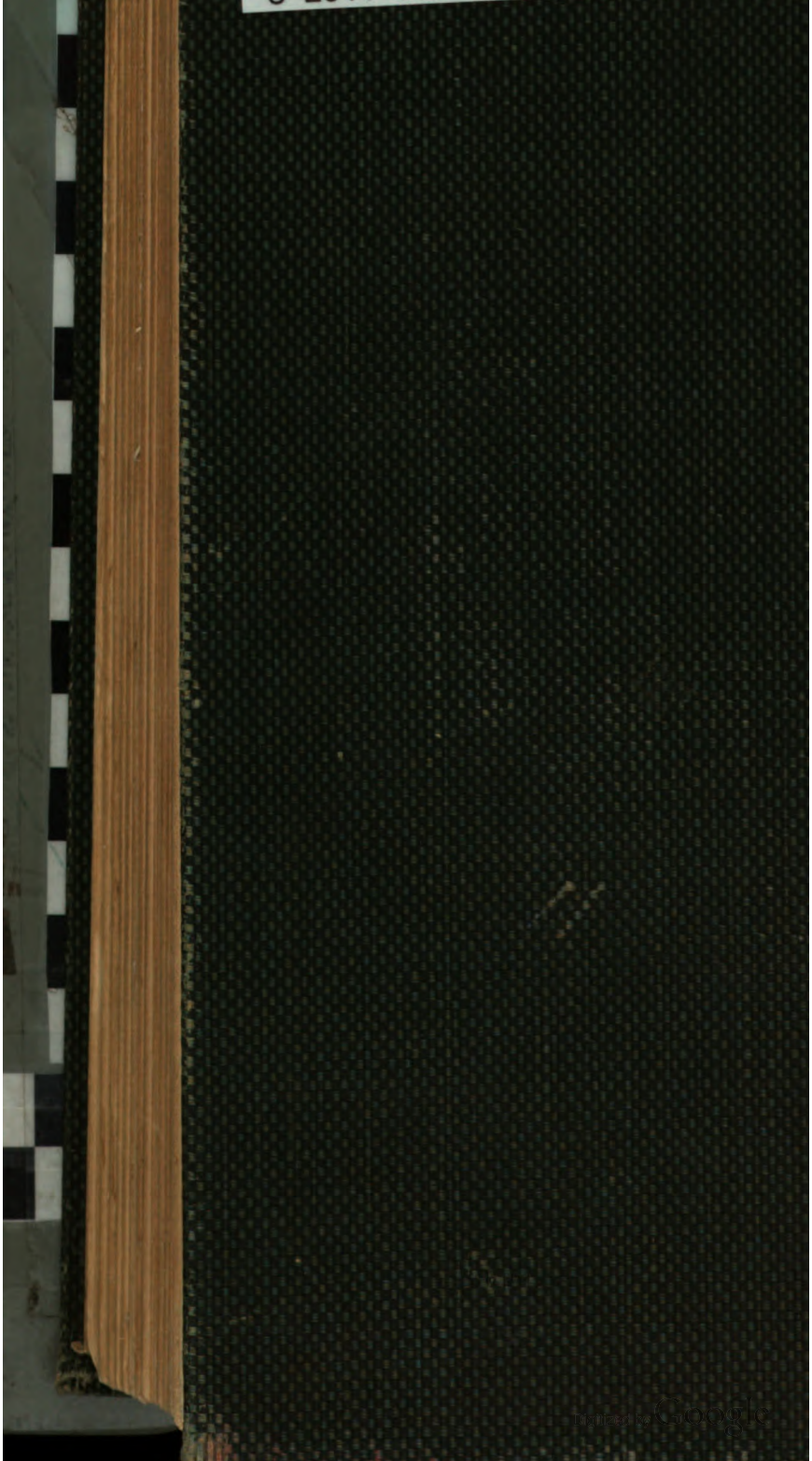
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